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THE
STUDENTS' COMMENTARY
ON THE
H O L Y B I B L E .

THE
STUDENTS' COMMENTARY
ON THE
HOLY BIBLE.

Founded on the Speaker's Commentary.

ABRIDGED AND EDITED
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J O B.

. INTRODUCTION.

THE most ancient if not universal opinion among Hebrews and Christians was that the persons and events described in this Book are strictly historical, and that the very words of the speakers are accurately reported. The principal Rabbinical authorities, the Syrian Fathers, many Greek ecclesiastical writers, and critics of eminence in modern times, have believed that Moses wrote the introduction and the closing chapters, and compiled the dialogue from documents with which he may have become acquainted during his residence in Midian.

The fact of Job's existence and the substantial truth of the narrative are undoubtedly assumed by the sacred writers (see Ezek. xiv. 14, 20; James v. 11); and the invention of a story without foundation in facts, the creation of a person represented as having a real historical existence, is wholly alien to the spirit of antiquity. Throughout the narrative and the dialogue there is a singular air of reality. In all the descriptions of manners and customs, domestic, social, and political, and even in the casual illustrations, the genuine colouring of the age of Job is faithfully observed. From the beginning to the end of the Book no single reference is made to the Mosaic Law; the peculiar institutions of Israel, and the cardinal events of the national history after the Exodus, are wholly unnoticed. Critics con-

cur in extolling the fresh, antique simplicity of manners, the genuine air, the wild, free, vigorous life of the desert; and admit the contrast between the manners, thoughts, and feelings described in this Book and those of the Israelites during the monarchical period. In all the characters there is a thorough consistency; each agent in the transaction has peculiarities of thought, language, and feeling, which give him a distinct and vivid personality. The incidents are narrated with minuteness and an accurate observance of local and temporary conditions.

Critics of eminence have however maintained that the whole work is pure invention, a moral and religious apologue: others, with less improbability, suppose that upon a basis of facts preserved by tradition, the genius of an original and highly intellectual thinker has raised this monument, in which they recognise the loftiest and noblest product of Semitic genius.

On various grounds, and with considerable modifications, some reducing the historical element to a minimum, others giving it a preponderating share in the composition, the latter theory is held by the great majority of modern critics.

2. The Book consists of five parts. (a) The first part (chs. i. ii) presents the historical facts on which the arguments are based. Job is

set before us as exemplifying that union between perfect goodness and temporal happiness, which was regarded by ancient dogmatists not merely as the ordinary and normal, but as the invariable result of the divine government of the world. Such a combination raises the question, whether goodness which secures such results may not be a refined form of selfishness. In order to have the question proposed in the most searching form, and the answer given on absolute authority, we are admitted to the council of heaven; there alone can the deep mysteries of existence be examined and fully comprehended. The question is asked by "the adversary," "Doth Job fear God for nought? (i. 9). Is not his piety simply the result of calculation? If he were once convinced that the calculation was a mistake, if the protection and outward proofs of favour were withdrawn, would he not renounce God?" One answer only could be given which would meet the cavil fully. Satan is permitted to put forth his hand. He destroys Job's wealth, Job's children. The piety of Job bears that trial, and is intact. One only suggestion remains for the Adversary: though all else is gone, health remains, and with health the possibility and hope of restoration. That too Satan is permitted to assail; Job is smitten at once with elephantiasis, the disease which was peculiarly regarded as a result and proof of divine anger, one that might convince Job, if his piety were dependent upon temporal blessings, that it was unavailing (ii. 7 note). His wife breaks down under that trial, and, becoming an unconscious but effective instrument of the adversary, in his words

counsels her husband to renounce God. Job remains steadfast. So far Satan has been baffled. He has no more cavil to suggest. To the end of the Book he passes altogether out of sight. No allusion is made to him in the following dialogue, nor at the close, when judgment is finally pronounced by God.

But with the departure of Satan the argument is not closed. Although the question was settled as regarded Job's special case, yet the mind of any one, who reflected upon the facts, would be sorely troubled, and numerous other questions, touching the relations between divine justice and human destinies, called for consideration.

Hence (b) the second part (chs. iii.-xxxi); the discussion which exhausts all that the human mind could suggest, apart from the revelation of a future state of compensation and retributive justice. It arises in the most natural manner as a result of the visit of condolence on the part of three men, who represent the wisdom and experience of the age (ii. 11). Some time (cp. vii. 3) had elapsed in the interval, during which the disease had made formidable progress, so that Job was no longer recognised by his friends, and his mind had contemplated on every side the mysterious bearings of the dispensation. They sat by Job seven days, silent in presence of his great agony: and then Job partly, it may be, trusting in their sympathy (vi. 14-21), or unable to repress his sorrow, spoke out all that was in his heart (see ch. iii. concluding note).

With the answer to that outburst begins the series of discourses which continued, probably for seven

ral successive days. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar bring forward arguments, which are met and refuted by Job.

The results of this first discussion (iv.-xiv) may be briefly summed up. Job's friends held the theory, which appears *up to that time* to have been unquestioned, that the mere fact of affliction proved the previous commission of some special sin. If the sinner repented and turned to God, restoration to peace, and even increased prosperity, might be expected; otherwise, affliction would issue in destruction. Applying these principles to Job's case, his friends are in the outset scandalized by the vehemence of his complaints, and when they find that he has no confession to make, but disavows all special guilt, they become convinced that his faith is unsound.

To do justice to Job's answers, we must bear in mind (1) that the direct object of the trial, though one of which he and his friends are equally unconscious, was to ascertain whether, when deprived of all earthly blessings and visited by all earthly sufferings, he would renounce God; and (2) that his moral integrity is affirmed by God Himself. Job knows that he is not an offender; that, whatever may be the object of the afflictions, which, as he admits, come from God, they are not proofs of guilt, for God knows his innocence. This consciousness enables him (a) to deny that punishment in this life inevitably follows upon guilt, or proves its commission; and (b) to declare, that in point of fact, prosperity and misery are not always, or even generally, commensurate with man's deserts (xii. 6). Job can see that all results and events are in God's hand, to Whom he would

leave them (xiii. 15), but of the principles by which they are regulated he knows nothing, and he is sure that his friends are equally ignorant (xiii. 4-10). Job, therefore, turns to supplication, he still relies on God's mercy: but inasmuch as he is utterly without hope of restoration in this life, and regards death as the end of all earthly existence, he prays that Sheol may be to him a hiding place, where he may rest until God calls him forth, and manifests Himself in love (xiv. 13-15).

In the second colloquy (xv.-xxi) the three interlocutors take a more advanced position. Eliphaz (xv) assumes that Job has been actually guilty of sins, which brought on merited punishment. Bildad charges him with ungodliness (xviii); Zophar holds that his sufferings and losses are but an inadequate retribution for former sins (xx).

Job, in reply, recognizes God's hand in his afflictions, but denies that they are brought on by wrong doing (xvi. 7-17); he claims the right to pray, and appeals to God; but without hope, save that which may survive in Sheol. This thought finds full expression in the declaration, that at the latter day, God, his Redeemer, will stand upon the earth, and manifest Himself to him; he shall see Him with his own eyes and in the integrity of his personal existence (xix. 23-28 notes). He then shows the impossibility of vindicating God's justice on any other principle, since unbroken prosperity throughout life is frequently the portion of wicked and utterly ungodly men (xxi).

In the third colloquy (xxii.-xxxi) Eliphaz attempts to show that the position formerly occupied by Job presented temptations to

certain crimes, which the punishments inflicted upon him prove that he must have committed. He suggests that submission to God may lead to restored communion, and as a result, to wealth, security, and above all, to increased means of benefiting mankind. Bildad leaves Job's arguments untouched. Zophar is silent.

Job repeats his former statements, and enforces them with new arguments (xxiii., xxiv.). In the last two discourses, when his opponents have withdrawn from the contest, Job states his own deliberate opinion upon all the points of the controversy. All creation is confounded by God's majesty, man catches but a faint echo of His word, and is wholly unable to comprehend His ways. He then draws out the great truths underlying his opponents' arguments; and, correcting his own hasty and unguarded statements, describes the sure destruction which sooner or later awaits the wicked (xxvii.). In ch. xxviii Job shows that the ingenuity and powers of man give him no insight at all into the wisdom of the Creator, and that his own wisdom and understanding consist wholly in the fear of the Lord and in departing from evil. Chs. xxix. - xxxi contain a description of his former greatness contrasted with his actual misery; and a vindication of his character from the charges made or suggested by his opponents.

(c) Third part. At this point (xxxii) a new speaker is introduced. Elihu, a young man connected by descent with the family of Job, justifies his interference by two allegations: first, that the three friends had failed; they had advanced without proving charges

against Job, and shown themselves bigoted and unjust; and, secondly, that Job had maintained his own righteousness in a spirit which arraigned the righteousness of God. He professes to set forth a new and different theory of chastisement. Its main and characteristic purport is instruction. God speaks to man, and teaches him, in order to save him from ruin. Above all, He prepares him by the intervention of an Angel, specially charged with the work of mediation, for repentance and restoration to a state of grace. Elihu then argues that the charge of unrighteousness brought against God is blasphemous and irrational. God is the only source of justice; it is impossible for Him to be unjust: by His absolute wisdom He knoweth all things; by His absolute power He controls all events with the one eternal purpose of establishing the cause of righteousness, every chastisement being at once needful, and exactly proportioned to the offence. If prayer seem to be unavailing, it is only when it is offered in a disobedient and faithless spirit. The last discourse of Elihu (xxxvi. - xxxvii) touches with great force upon the mercy and justice of God's interventions, and the imminent peril of those who disregard them; it ends with a passage in which it is shown that the great object of all natural phenomena is to set forth the greatness and goodness of God, and to *teach* His creatures. The last words of Elihu are apparently spoken while the storm is coming on which ushers in the approaching Theophany.

From this analysis it is obvious that weighty truths have been developed in the discussion. Nearly every theory of the possible objects

and uses of suffering, has been reviewed; but the mystery of the dispensation has not been cleared up. Its immediate and real object—viz. to test the sincerity of Job, and thereby to set at rest the question, whether goodness in its highest aspects, integrity towards man and devout fear of God, is independent of outer circumstances—never occurs to the mind of Job, of his three friends, or of Elihu. It was not one which would present itself to the mind of the sufferer, nor one that could be discovered without a special revelation by those who witnessed his misery. Hence the necessity for the Theophany. Out of the whirlwind Jehovah speaks.

(*d*) Fourth part. In two distinct addresses the Almighty reproves and silences the murmurs of Job (xxxviii.—xli). God condescends to illustrate His Power as the Creator by a marvellously comprehensive survey of the glory of creation, and His Providence by a review of the phenomena of the animal kingdom. From both Job is led to infer that purposes impenetrable by the human mind are contemplated by the Omniscient, and that man's one duty is submission. The first address suffices to reduce Job to submission: he confesses his vileness and acknowledges his inability to answer his Maker (xl. 4, 5). The second address suggests a different thought. A charge of injustice against God is equivalent to an assumption that he who brings it is competent to rule the universe. He should be able to reduce all creatures to order; but, so far from that, man cannot even subdue the irrational monsters of creation. Baffled by the brute strength of Behemoth,

and the terrific force of Leviathan, how can he contend with Him Who made and rules them all?

(*e*) Fifth part. Job's unreserved submission terminates his trial. His integrity is recognized, and his friends are declared not to have spoken the truth, a fault pardoned on the intercession of Job. The restoration of Job's earthly prosperity, which is an inevitable result of the divine manifestation, symbolizes the final compensation of the righteous for all the sufferings of life.¹

The direct object of the whole work is, therefore, to show that although goodness, by virtue of the divine appointment, and as a result of divine governance, has a natural tendency to secure a full measure of temporal happiness; yet that in its essence it is independent of such a result. Goodness consists in the fear of God, and in the hatred of evil. These convictions are the central principles of Job's mind, but their sincerity could only be demonstrated by the withdrawal of all outward conditions, on which they might be represented as dependent. Selfishness in some form is declared by Satan to be the basis on which all apparent goodness rests. That question is tried in the case of Job. Every form of calamity is brought to bear upon

¹ That this was not (as some have thought) the direct and primary object of the work is clear, since no allusion is made to it in the last discourse of Job, or even, as might have been expected, in that of the Almighty. Like all other intimations of the doctrine in the Old Testament, those in this Book are throughout expressions of faith and hope, anticipations not resting on previous revelation, but the spontaneous product of the human spirit in contact with the mysteries of existence, preparing the way for the future manifestation of the truth by the Son of God.

him : he feels each acutely ; but he bears them all without a murmur. To retain firmly his integrity and an absolute faith in God under such a trial, was a sufficient answer to the question. But the struggle produced other effects : it drew out from himself and his opponents an inquiry into the general purport and object of divine chastisements ; and it developed in Job's own spirit a longing for a future judgment, which issued in a full and assured anticipation of deliverance. Still, having no objective grounds for such a hope, he limits it to the vindication of his own integrity and of God's justice ; and thereby unconsciously meets the whole question whether selfishness in any form is the motive or mainspring of his life.

3. Objections have been taken at various times to various parts of the Book ;² but of late years the most serious objection has been that which touches the discourse of Elihu. The difference of style is unquestionable ; the grammatical forms and the words are replete with indications of Aramaic or Chaldaic origin ; a fact probably explained by the supposition that the author of the Book adhered faithfully to the form in which the dialogue was handed down by tradition. Other facts are further thought to supply a *prima facie* argument for the assumption that the discourse was added at a later period, whether by a different writer, who felt that an important element in the discussion was lacking, or by the same author in his old age.

The question as to the genuineness of the discourse depends, to some extent, upon the view which is taken of its value and importance. Some critics treat it contemptuously, and suppose that it was inserted only to enhance by contrast the effect of the last solemn discourse of Job : others hold that it contains the true solution of the great problem set before us in the Book. Admitting the latter estimate of its value, the doctrinal system of Elihu may be shown not to indicate a considerable advance beyond that of the other interlocutors, including Job himself, but to differ rather in degree than in kind from that occupied, or suggested, in the preceding discourses ; the difference being either one of development, as in the very beautiful representation of mediatorial agency and of the loving and instructive character of divine chastisements, or of personal application of those doctrines to the case of Job. Further, it seems incredible that had Elihu's discourse been added afterwards, there should be no traces in it of doctrines which were undoubtedly taught at the earliest period to which critics have assigned the interpolation, doctrines, which, if known, would have suggested the strongest arguments for warning or consolation. The internal connexion between this and other parts of the Book deserves great consideration in forming a judgment upon this point ; it abounds in references to passages in the discourses of Job and his friends so covert as only to be discovered by close inquiry ; yet when pointed out, so natural and striking, as to leave no place for reasonable doubt. Elihu, in fact, supplies just what

² *c.g.*, The historical portion at the beginning and the end ; xxvii. 7-end ; xl. 15-xli. 34, have been considered interpolations by some.

Job had repeatedly called for, a confutation of his opinions by rational and human argument; such a confutation as would not, like the arguments of the other opponents, rest upon false or hypocritical assertions, but would befit a truthful and candid reasoner. The reasonings of Elihu, moreover, are really needed for the full development of the subject-matter of the Book, and yet they are such as could not, without irreverence, be attributed to Almighty God.

4. The Book of Job abounds in words and forms which are commonly known as Aramaic, found in the Syriac and Chaldee languages, of which it is well known that the influence was first perceptible about the time of the Babylonish Captivity. This applies more or less to all the discourses; and must be held to belong to the original structure of the composition. On this ground mainly, some critics have assigned the whole work to the period after the Captivity. The Aramaisms, however, of late Hebrew writers differ essentially from those which occur in this Book. The latter are, with scarcely an exception, such as characterize the archaic or highly poetic style; they are genuine and natural indications of hoar antiquity.

But Aramaisms are not the only, or the most characteristic, peculiarities of the language of Job. It was long since remarked by Jerome that it approaches more nearly to the Arabic than to any other production of the Hebrews; and it has been considered that the best account of this fact is that the work must have been written, substantially in the form which is now before us, at a very early period, before the different branches of the

Semitic race had completely formed their separate dialects. The descent ascribed to Job, and the geographical position of the districts inhabited by him and the interlocutors in the dialogue, of themselves account naturally both for the Aramaic and Arabic colouring. But, further, the Moabite stone has proved that the descendants of Lot spoke a language, differing indeed from the Hebrew in dialectic peculiarities, but so nearly identical with it that the natives of Moab and Palestine would be mutually intelligible without the need of an interpreter; and it has proved that the language was written in characters common to the Phœnicians and all branches of the Semitic race. Hence, there is a substantial proof that the descendants of the common stock, after an interval of more than a thousand years, could not only understand each other's language, but read each other's productions. It is evident that the argument would be stronger were it assumed that this Book became known to the Hebrews at a far earlier period in their history; even at the period when Moses dwelt in Midian, when he wrote the Pentateuch in a language, in a style, and probably also in characters which were common to the Semitic race.

Nor is this impression weakened when we consider the style of Job. All critics recognize its grand, archaic character. It is peculiar for obscurities of expression far beyond any other Hebrew writing. When obscurity is owing to obsolete words occurring in sentences otherwise remarkable for simplicity and natural grace, or to intense concentration of thought and language, or to incidental allusions to long forgotten traditions, it is an all

but infallible proof of antiquity. Such are precisely the causes of that obscurity which affects every chapter of the Book, and is attested by the mass of conflicting interpretations, which after centuries of labour leave numerous passages involved in darkness, notwithstanding the grand simplicity of the leading thoughts.

A poem so perfect in design, and so grand in execution, was quite compatible with the age and circumstances of Job. Above all, power, originality, deep insight into the very springs of human thought, and vivid representation of objective realities, have ever been the special characteristics of the earliest developments of national genius. Metrical compositions of considerable extent were actually engraved on stone at a period which all critics admit to be far more ancient than Moses.³ But while we have in the Book of Job a singularly strict observance of the laws of Hebrew poetry, so strict as to be paralleled only in the poems which the Bible attributes to the age of Moses, or to the period before David, we have no certain indications of that arrangement into measured stanzas or strophes which characterizes the Book of Psalms: nor the combination of varied cadences and sentences of unequal length and different structure, which gives so peculiar a charm to the poetry of the great Prophets.

5. One of the most important points in determining the age in which this Book was either written or first made known, whether by

translation or simple transcription, is the comparison of the Book with Hebrew writings of which the date is known. There are an immense number of passages in Job which bear so close a resemblance in thought and in language to books of every date, from the Pentateuch to the close of the Canon, as to make it certain that they must have been derived from a common source.

The general results are as follows. All passages written from the time of Jeremiah onwards are *certainly* posterior to the composition, and general circulation, of the Book of Job.⁴

The resemblance between Job and the productions of the period extending from Solomon to Josiah, is most striking in those passages of the Hebrew writers which bear the strongest impress of archaic character. This is specially the case with the Proverbs, to which it is admitted that the Book of Job bears a far closer affinity in style and in modes of thought than to any portion of the Old Testament.⁵

The points of contact with the Psalms are exceedingly numerous; and the question of priority may be fairly determined by comparing the state of development of doctrine and speculation in Job, with that of the Psalms and the Prophetic Books.

⁴ e.g. Jer. xx. 14-18 is derived from Job iii. 3-12. Cp. also the ref. to the character of Job in Ezek. xiv. 14 &c.

⁵ e.g. It is certain that the description of the Divine Wisdom in Prov. viii., is founded upon Job xxviii., with which it agrees in all substantial points, and in the whole tone of thought and of expression, whereas it differs from it in details, which belong to a later age (e.g. viii. 34, ix. 1-5), more especially in the vivid personification which develops the thought of Job: cp. also Prov. viii. 1-10 and 30-35, with Job xxviii. 12 and 28.

³ See the Introductions to the Pentateuch and Exodus. The observation is still more applicable to papyri of extreme antiquity; such, for instance, as the Hymn to the Nile; and the *Lilany* to the Sun.

For example : on comparing the passages which speak of the state after death, we find one general resemblance. In none are there distinct proofs or unquestionable traces of an objective revelation. Man's spirit struggles with the mystery of existence, left, as it would seem, intentionally to its own instincts, and groping its way darkly. The passages in Job amount to little more than a yearning, an earnest longing for a vindication of his own righteousness, and of the divine justice. It is evidently the first attempt to deal with the problem, which after all it leaves unsolved. But the words of the Psalmist have a very different character. He knows that God will not leave his soul in Sheol, that when he awakes he will be satisfied with God's likeness, that the righteous will have dominion over the wicked in the morning, that at the right hand of God are pleasures for evermore. The aspirations of Job may have given the impulse, and even suggested the forms of expression, but in the Psalmist it has become a lively and sure hope, amounting, though as yet without external support, to a subjective certainty. In the Prophets, denunciations of the future judgment of the wicked, and assurances of the eternal triumph of the just, become gradually clearer and more definite, until they issue in the hope of a bodily resurrection.

The representation of Angels in Job is no indication of a later age. Their fall intimated here is also certainly assumed, in the most ancient notices of the Pentateuch, and is inseparable from the account of man's temptation and fall. The traces of frailty noted as inherent in their nature are indeed peculiar

to this Book : but so far as these notices suggest any argument it would be in favour of the independence of purely Hebrew tradition, and therefore of patriarchal antiquity. Again, the traces of prayer addressed to Angels (see v. 1) are not found in other Hebrew writings, within any period which critics would assign to the Book of Job. That such a practice should have prevailed among some families connected with that of Abraham is far from improbable : indeed, the entire suppression of Angel-worship would seem to have been peculiar to the Hebrews : a fact the more remarkable since the mediation, the guidance and protection, and the constant ministrations of the Great Angel, are conspicuous features in the notices of the patriarchal age. Lastly, the representation of Satan harmonizes, as might be expected, with that of other inspired writers, yet it has these peculiarities : the word is not yet a proper name, but is used simply in the sense of the adversary ; in later Books it is a recognized designation of the Fiend : he moves (ii. 3) God directly, but is not represented as tempting man by internal or spiritual suggestion ; all the trial, so far as Satan is concerned, is external : he does not (as in the Psalms and Zech. iii. 1), stand at the right hand of Job as the accuser, but appears only in the court of heaven as the calumniator of Job.

Inquiry into other religious or ethical points leads to a similar conclusion. The morality of Job agrees, of course, in its fundamental principles with that of the Pentateuch and of all inspired writers, but it is wholly independent of the institutions of Mosaism, it is tho-

roughly patriarchal, as may be seen more especially in that very complete account of his own past life given by Job in his last discourse (see xxxi. notes). Similar characteristics mark the notices of religious observance. Idolatry, in the forms prevalent under the kings of Israel, is not noticed as a possible temptation. The one temptation which Job himself recognizes as imaginable, is that of secret enticement to a gesture of adoration addressed to the heavenly luminaries (xxxi. 26-28), a form of worship of which the existence is attested by monuments far more ancient than Job.

Taking all the ascertained facts into consideration, it may be confidently maintained, that whether the writer of the Book were a Palestinian Hebrew or not, he must have lived at a time, and under circumstances, which either kept him in ignorance of the institutions peculiar to Mosaism, or made him to a most remarkable extent independent of their influence. The hypothesis, which on the whole seems least encumbered

with difficulties, is that the work was written in the country of Job, probably by one of his descendants, but certainly after a considerable interval of time, the patriarch being evidently represented as belonging to another age, his own life extending to the fourth generation (xlii. 16) of children born after his deliverance. The earliest tradition of the Hebrews, that Moses became acquainted with the work when residing in Midian, has no internal improbability for those who accept the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The supposition, however, that we owe the Book in its actual form to a writer of the Solomonian period, has much in its favour, and meets many difficulties. The style is so thoroughly impregnated with Aramaic and Arabic idioms that the writer must have lived at a distance from Jerusalem, and in a district bordering on countries where Syriac and Arabic were spoken. This would point naturally to the Hauran: or (with less probability) to the southern district of Judæa.

THE BOOK OF

J O B.¹

CHAP. 1. THERE was a man ^ain the land of Uz, whose name was ^bJob; and that man was ^cperfect and upright, and one that ^dfeared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His ^esubstance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great ^fhousehold; so that this man was the greatest of all the ^gmen of the east. ¶ And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, ^hand offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and ⁱcursed God in their

^a Gen. 22. 20, 21.

^b Ezek. 14. 14.

Jam. 5. 11.

^c Gen. 6. 9.

^d & 17. 1.

^e ch. 2. 3.

^f Prov. 8. 13.

^g & 16. 6.

^h Gen. 8. 20.

ch. 42. 8.

ⁱ 1 Kin. 21.

10, 13.

¹ *Moses* is thought to have wrote the Book of Job,

whilst among the *Ma-dianites*.

² Or, *cattle*.

³ Or, *husbandry*.

⁴ Heb. *sons of the east*.

I. 1. *Uz*] A district peopled by the descendants of *Uz*. Three patriarchs bear this name (Gen. x. 23, xxii. 21, xxxvi. 28): the second of these, a son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, probably gave the name to this country. The district is generally identified with that occupied by the *Asitæ*, which lay to the north-east of *Idumæa*, and appears to have been nearly co-extensive with *Bathanyeh*, or *East Hauran*, once a rich and fertile country.

Job] The derivation of the name is uncertain. It was borne by a son of *Issachar* (Gen. xli. 13), and very closely resembles the name *Jobab*, a descendant of *Esau* (Gen. xxxvi. 33 note), with whom our Patriarch has been identified by early tradition. Both forms are probably derived from a word signifying jubilant exultation, and express the joy of a noble family at the birth of an heir.

perfect &c.] These epithets give a complete view of Job's character. The words "perfect" (*i.e.* single-hearted, simple, not wilfully or consciously committing sin); and "upright" (a word which exactly represents the original) describe him in his relations to man. Cp. marg. reff. and the characters in Matt. viii. 10, 11; Acts x. 2-4.

2. *seven sons &c.*] The numbers in this part of the narrative are significant, representing the completeness of God's providential gifts.

3. *substance*] Better, as in the marg. The word so rendered always means live-stock. Job's wealth was not that of a mere dweller in the wilderness. His residence was stationary, he must have had rich pastures for

his sheep, and a vast extent of arable land. The absence of horses should be noted; it proves that Job was not a marauder: horses were then used exclusively for war.

men of the east] Or, as in the marg.: a name specially given to the tribes between *Palestine* and the *Euphrates*.

4. *his day*] Probably the day in each week which came to him in order. The expression implies that the whole family lived in habits of frank, brotherly intercourse. God's gifts were thankfully used without a suspicion of wrong, though not without a consciousness of the danger of misuse. It is noticeable that Job did not join the festivities which he watched with anxiety.

5. *the days*] The seven days, one for each son.

sent and sanctified them] This probably means that he sent for them, and caused them to perform the ceremonial ablutions, which were customary before offering any sacrifice. The whole family thus assembled weekly at their father's house to take part in the religious service. Job was his own priest. The priesthood was inherent in the head of the family, as the highest function of fatherhood, in accordance with patriarchal usage (Exod. xxviii. 1 note).

burnt offerings] The only form of sacrifice known to the Patriarchs (see Gen. viii. 20, xxii. 2), representing the absolute right of God over His creatures, and the absolute surrender of the creature's self. See vol. i. p. 229.

cursed] Or, "renounced." The word so rendered means properly "blessed;" but there is no doubt that in this and other passages

- ^a ch. 2. 3. 6 hearts. Thus did Job continually. ¶ Now ^athere was a day
^a 1Kin. 22. 19. ^awhen the sons of God came to present themselves before the
ch. 38. 7. 7 LORD, and ²Satan came also ³among them. And the LORD said
unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the
ⁱ ch. 2. 2. LORD, and said, From ⁱgoing to and fro in the earth, and from
Matt. 12. 43. 8 walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan,
1 Pet. 5. 8. ⁴Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there* is none like
ch. 2. 3. him in the earth, ⁴a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth
ⁱ ver. 1. 9 God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and
^m Ps. 34. 7. 10 said, Doth Job fear God for nought? ^mHast not thou made
Isai. 5. 2. an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he
ⁿ Ps. 128. 1, 2. hath on every side? ⁿthou hast blessed the work ^oof his hands,
Prov. 10. 22. 11 and his ^osubstance is increased in the land. ^oBut put forth thine
^o ch. 2. 5. hand now, and touch all that he hath, ^oand he will ^pcurse thee
& 19. 21. 12 to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he
^p Isai. 8. 21. hath *is* in thy ^ppower; only upon himself put not forth thine
Mal. 3. 13, 14. hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.
^q Eccles. 9. 12. 13 ¶ And there was a day ^qwhen his sons and his daughters *were*
14 eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and
there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were
15 plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans
fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the
servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped

¹ Heb. *all the days*.² Heb. *the Adversary*, 1
Chr. 21. 1. Rev. 12. 9,
10.³ Heb. *in the midst of them*.⁴ Heb. *Hast thou set thy
heart on.*
⁵ Or, *cattle*.⁶ Heb. *if he curse thee not
to thy face*.⁷ Heb. *hand*, Gen. 16. 6.

(see marg. ref. note) it is taken in the sense of renouncing or forgetting God.

6. *a day*] The day, i.e. the day on which "the sons of God," the Angels, were summoned, periodically as it would seem, to appear before God, and give account of all transactions in His dominions (cp. marg. ref. and Zech vi. 5).

Satan] Rather, as in the marg. This Spirit, though evil, is evidently counted among the Angels by origin and nature. He comes among them as one of their order. Like them he has to give an account of what he has observed (see 1 K. xxii. 19-22; Zech iii. 1, 2; Rev. xii. 9). The existence of a malignant Spirit, permitted to range the earth, tempting and calumniating God's rational creatures, is implied or asserted in all Scripture from Genesis to Revelation; and it is to be observed that the final expulsion of this Spirit from the higher region is represented in the New Testament as a result of the Saviour's coming. The mystery which hangs over such representations is common to all questions which concern the origin or continuance of moral evil.

among them] An expression showing that Satan came not as one of the sons of God, nor as bidden.

7. "Going to and fro" implies rapid and extensive wandering; "walking up and down" repeated and careful observation.

9. *for nought*] The central point of the whole narrative is in this word. No flaw is discoverable in Job's outer life: but the

question is raised whether his goodness was disinterested. See Intro. p. 2.

11. *touch*] Or, *smite*. The Hebrew word implies the infliction of calamity, especially by God (cp. Ps. lxxiii. 14; Isai. liii. 4).

and he will curse &c.] Or, *if he will not renounce thee*, openly, shamelessly, insolently.

12. *power*] Or, *hand*, as in the marg. Satan had said, "put forth Thy hand:" the answer is, "behold all that he hath is in *thy* hand:" the physical evil thus takes place under God's control and by His will, but its infliction is committed to the malignant Spirit. The object of Satan was to tempt Job; the permission was given in order to prove him, and at the same time to raise his spirit into a higher sphere of goodness.

13. *in their eldest brother's house*] On the first day, therefore, of the weekly meetings (v. 5).

14. *were plowing*] In the Hauran this takes place in January; when also in order to protect themselves from marauders, the inhabitants plough the lands in succession, bringing all their oxen, with their guards, into the same district.

15. *the Sabeans*] Three races bearing this name are mentioned in Genesis (x. 7, 28, xxv. 3). The tribe here spoken of was evidently nomadic, prowling, like their descendants the Bedouins, over the districts to the north of Arabia.

- 16 alone to tell thee. While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, ¹The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed
17 them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and ²fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of
18 the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, ³"Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest
19 brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind ⁴from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am
20 escaped alone to tell thee. ¶ Then Job arose, ⁵and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and ⁶fell down upon the ground,
21 and worshipped, and said,
 ⁷"Naked came I out of my mother's womb,
 And naked shall I return thither:
 The LORD ⁸gave, and the LORD hath ⁹taken away;
 ¹⁰Blessed be the name of the LORD.
22 ¹¹"In all this Job sinned not, nor ¹²charged God foolishly.
- CHAP. 2.** AGAIN ¹³"there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among
2 them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And ¹⁴Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and
3 from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, ¹⁵"a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he ¹⁶holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, ¹⁷"to destroy him
4 without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath ¹⁸will he give for his life.

¹ Or, *A great fire.*

² Heb. *rushed.*

³ Heb. *from aside, &c.*

⁴ Or, *robe.*

⁵ Or, *attributed folly to God.*

⁶ Heb. *to swallow him up.*

⁷ ver. 4, 13.

⁸ Gen. 37. 29.

Ezra 9. 3.

⁹ 1 Pet. 5. 6.

¹⁰ Ps. 49. 17.

1 Tim. 6. 7.

¹¹ Eccles. 5.

19.

Jam. 1. 17.

¹² Matt. 20. 15.

¹³ Eph. 5. 20.

1 Thes. 5. 18.

¹⁴ ch. 2. 10.

¹⁵ ch. 1. 6.

¹⁶ ch. 1. 7.

¹⁷ ch. 1. 1, 8.

¹⁸ ch. 27. 5, 6.

¹⁹ ch. 9. 17.

16. *The fire of God*] Probably lightning (Ps. lxxviii. 48 marg.). A storm extending over the vast tracts occupied by 7000 sheep (v. 3), and destroying them together with their guards, would not be attributed to merely natural causes by God-fearing men.

17. *The Chaldeans*] Or, *Casdim*. Two ancient races bore this name; the one a Semitic tribe dwelling in the north of Assyria, the other in Mesopotamia (see Gen. xxii. 22). The former may be meant here: they were a warlike robber-race, who still retained their old seat and customs in the time of Xenophon, and are now represented by the Kurds.

18. See v. 13; all occurred on one day.

19. *smote the four corners*] This shows that it was a whirlwind, or cyclone, far more destructive than direct winds.

the young men] Or "young people;" the Hebrew word includes both sexes, as in the Pentateuch.

20. *The shaving of the head*, an act done slowly and carefully, indicates mastery over

the strong passion: there was no wild tearing of hair, but simply the adoption of the usual form of mourning. Cp. Jer. vii. 29; Isai. xxii. 12. He "worshipped," i.e., he prostrated himself, the most solemn act of adoration; thus directly, though unconsciously, refuting the assertion (v. 11) that he would renounce God in bereavement.

21. *return thither*] i.e. to the dust or mother earth; this interpretation is supported by passages which recognize the analogy between the womb and the earth, the source and receptacle of living creatures (Ps. cxxxix. 15; Eccles. v. 15).

22. *nor charged God foolishly*] Either as in marg.; or, "did not utter any foolishness against God." The second rendering seems on the whole to suit the context, since the special object of the temptation was to make Job blaspheme.

II. 4. *Skin for skin*] The exact meaning of this proverbial saying is doubtful, but the general sense is determined by the context: so long as a man's own person is un-

- / ch. 1. 11.
 " ch. 19. 20.
 " ch. 1. 12.
 ' Isai. 1. 6.
 * 2 Sam. 13. 19.
 ch. 42. 6.
 Ezek. 27. 30.
 Matt. 11. 21.
 ' ch. 21. 15.
 " ver. 3.
 " ch. 1. 21.
 Rom. 12. 12.
 Jam. 5. 10, 11.
 " ch. 1. 22.
 " Ps. 39. 1.
 " Prov. 17. 17.
 " Gen. 36. 11.
 " Gen. 25. 2.
 " ch. 42. 11.
 Rom. 12. 15.
 " Neh. 9. 1.
 Lam. 2. 10.
 Ezek. 27. 30.
 " Gen. 50. 10.
- 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his ^obone and his
 6 flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. ^aAnd the LORD said
 unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; ¹but save his life.
 7 ¶ So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote
 Job with sore boils ⁴from the sole of his foot unto his crown.
 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; ^aand he
 9 sat down among the ashes. ¶ Then said his wife unto him,
 "Dost thou still ^mretain thine integrity? curse God, and die.
 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women
 speaketh. What? ²shall we receive good at the hand of God,
 and shall we not receive evil? ^oIn all this did not Job, ⁿsin
 11 with his lips. ¶ Now when Job's three ⁴friends heard of all
 this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his
 own place; Eliphaz the ^rTemanite, and Bildad the ^sShuhite, and
 Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment
 12 together to come ^tto mourn with him and to comfort him. And
 when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they
 lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his
 mantle, and ^usprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.
 13 So they sat down with him upon the ground ^sseven days and
 seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw
 that his grief was very great.

CHAP. 3. AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.
 2 And Job ^sspake, and said,

¹ Or, only.

² Heb. answered.

6

touched he may bear any loss with comparative firmness, give up the skin or life (cp. xviii. 13, xix. 26) of others, even of his children, so that his own be safe. Satan can recognize no principle of action but selfishness, and finds in it alone the secret of Job's firmness.

7. sore boils] The disease was elephantiasis. The original word means an intense heat, hence a burning and ulcerous swelling, or leprosy in its most terrible form, taking its name from the appearance of the body, which was covered with a knotty cancerous bark like the hide of an elephant. The state was that of progressive dissolution, ending slowly but surely in death. Job knew that it would be regarded as a decisive proof that he was suffering for some hidden and unpardonable sin (see Introd. p. 3; Lev. xiii. 1 note).

8. to scrape] The first symptoms are itching and foul discharge.

the ashes] Probably outside the house or city, as usual with lepers. The LXX. use the word "dung" which may possibly be correct; heaps of dry dung are found outside every town and village in the Hauran, and persons smitten with loathsome diseases lie on them day and night.

9. Satan is no more mentioned in the Book: his work was done; the sharp test of mental suggestion was applied to Job by his wife and friends. See Introd. p. 2.

10. foolish] Not merely this, but vile, of a low grovelling nature. Cp. Ps. xiv. 1.

The expression "with his lips" may pos-

sibly imply that the hard thoughts which Job afterwards uttered were beginning to work inwardly; but his answer was a real victory over the last and most grievous temptation.

11. Eliphaz was probably descended from Eliphaz the son of Esau (marg. ref.), whose own son, Teman, gave his name to the district (1 Chr. i. 45). It was famed for the wisdom of its inhabitants (Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8, 9). The name is significant; "my God is gold," as if goodness were identified with wealth (see xxii. 21 note).

the Shuhite] i.e. from the district named after Shuah (marg. ref.; 1 Chr. i. 32); it lay probably to the east of the Hauran, and has been identified with Shakka.

the Naamathite] Naama was probably in a district, now unknown, in the neighbourhood of Job. The name occurs not unfrequently in Syria. The LXX. render the word Μωαίος, probably referring to Maon, now Maan, a district to the east of Petra.

12. knew him not] Another symptom of the disease; their friend was so blackened and disfigured, that they could not recognize him.

III. 1. opened his mouth] This expression is used in Scripture only on solemn occasions, when the speakers give utterance to deep thoughts, or, as here, to long-repressed feelings. Cp. Matt. v. 2, and Ps. lxxviii. 2.

cursed] A different word from that in i. 5; it means "cursed" as a worthless and despicable thing.

- 3^a Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night *in which it was said*, There is a man child conceived.
- 4 Let that day be darkness;—let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it.
- 5 Let darkness and ^bthe shadow of death ¹stain it;
Let a cloud dwell upon it;
²Let the blackness of the day terrify it.
- 6 *As for that night*, let darkness seize upon it;
³Let it not be joined unto the days of the year,
Let it not come into the number of the months.
- 7 *Lo*, let that night be solitary,
Let no joyful voice come therein.
- 8 Let them curse it that curse the day,
^cWho are ready to raise up ⁴their mourning.
- 9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark;
Let it look for light, but *have* none;
Neither let it see ⁵the dawning of the day:
- 10 Because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* womb,
Nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.
- 11 ^aWhy died I not from the womb?
Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?
- 12 ^eWhy did the knees prevent me?
Or why the breasts that I should suck?
- 13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet,
I should have slept: then had I been at rest,
- 14 With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Which ^fbuilt desolate places for themselves;

^a ch. 10. 18,
19.
Jer. 15. 10.
& 20. 14.

^b ch. 10. 21. 22.
& 16. 16.
& 28. 3.
Ps. 23. 4.
& 44. 19.
& 107. 10, 14.
Jer. 13. 16.
Amos 5. 8.

^c Jer. 9. 17,
18.

^d ch. 10. 18.

^e Gen. 30. 3.
Isai. 66. 12.

^f ch. 15. 23.

¹ Or, *challenge it*.

² Or, *let them terrify it, as those who have a bitter*

day, Amos 8. 10.

³ Or, *let it not rejoice among the days*.

⁴ Or, *a leviathan*.

⁵ Heb. *the eyelids of the morning*, ch. 41. 18.

3. The exaggeration of the language is but the natural expression of hopelessness. Day and night are personified in order that Job may give vent to his feelings by cursing them.

5. *Let darkness &c.*] Or, *Let darkness &c. claim it*; lit., “redeem it,” as belonging properly to the region of darkness. The word rendered “shadow of death” is archaic, and means entire darkness, especially the blackness of Sheol, or Hades.

blackness] The Hebrew word probably means hot suffocating glooms. Job wishes that all the powers of darkness had assembled to drive back that day.

6. *be joined*] Better as in the margin (cp. Ex. xviii. 9); this presents a more forcible and appropriate image, the joy of motherly night.

7. *be solitary*] Lit., “barrenness.” The imprecations upon day (v. 6) and night are carefully discriminated; may day be utter absence of light, may night bear no more.

8. *that curse the day*] Perhaps an allusion to some such ancient and wide-spread superstition as that the sorcerer was believed, and believed himself, to be able to arrest the course of day and night by incantations. It does not follow that Job adopted the belief,

though he found in it an apt expression of his feelings: see note on v. 5.

mourning] Rather, *leviathan* (as in marg); not the crocodile as in ch. xli., but in all probability a symbol of the dragon, the enemy of light, who in old Eastern traditions is conceived as ready to swallow up sun and moon and plunge creation in original chaos or darkness.

11. *Why died I not &c.*] Job passes to the next alternative, death before the awakening of consciousness. He counts up with the wild ingenuity of a diseased mind all the chances which might at once have cut his life short. In the following verses he enumerates the actual inhabitants of the nether world whom he conceives as without sensation, beyond the reach alike of joy or misery.

13. *For now &c.*] Or, *For then should I have been lying still and quiet, I should have been asleep; then would there have been rest for me*.

14. *desolate places*] Probably an allusion to the sepulchres in the desert, such as the rock-tombs common not only in Egypt, but in Arabia, which must have been well known to Job.

- 15 Or with princes that had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver:
- ^c Ps. 58. 8. 16 Or ^aas an hidden untimely birth I had not been;
As infants *which* never saw light.
- 17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling;
And there the ¹weary be at rest.
- 18 *There* the prisoners rest together;
^bThey hear not the voice of the oppressor.
- ^a ch. 30. 7. 19 The small and great are there;
And the servant *is* free from his master.
- ^f Jer. 20. 18. 20 ⁱWherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
And life unto the ^kbitter in soul;
- ^k 1 Sam. 1. 10. 21 Which ²long for death, but it *cometh* not;
² Kin. 4. 27. And dig for it more than ^mfor hid treasures;
- Prov. 31. 6. 22 Which rejoice exceedingly,
^l Rev. 9. 6. And are glad, when they can find the grave?
- ^m Prov. 2. 4. 23 *Why is light given to a man whose way is hid,*
ⁿ And whom God hath hedged in?
- ⁿ ch. 19. 8. 24 For my sighing cometh ³before I eat,
Lam. 3. 7. And my roarings are poured out like the waters.
- 25 For ⁴the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me,
And that which I was afraid of is come unto me.
- 26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest,
Neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

CHAP. 4. THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
2 *If we assay* ^bto commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?
But ^cwho can withhold himself from speaking?

3 Behold, thou hast instructed many,
And thou ^ahast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling,
And thou ^bhast strengthened ⁷the feeble knees.

¹ Heb. *wearyed in strength.*

² Heb. *wait.*

³ Heb. *before my meat.*

⁴ Heb. *I feared a fear, and it came upon me.*

⁵ Heb. *a word.*

⁶ Heb. *who can refrain*

from words?

Heb. *the bowing knees*

Heb. 12. 12.

15. *that had gold*] Or, "who **have** gold," i.e. who lie in tombs where their gold and silver are buried with them: a well-known custom. Ornaments of great value, bracelets and jewels are found in Egyptian sepulchres.

17-19. There is rest, but little comfort in the view, the only one as yet taken by Job, that in death there is equality of lot, whatever may be the difference of character or antecedents.

18. *the oppressor*] Or, **exactor**, "task-master," the overseer appointed to summon labourers to their daily task. See Exod. iii. 7.

23. *whose way is hid*] The severest trial of Job was his inability to discern his way. Job feels himself "hedged" in on every side, but as a prisoner. See the opposite and true view of God's Providence in i. 10.

25, 26. In other words: "Whatever presentment of woe I may feel it is straightway realized: there is trouble upon trouble, without cessation."

This chapter exhausts all expressions of agony; there is not a gleam of hope in it; the heart is quite crushed; still, so far as regards the precise object of the trial, there is no giving way: Job neither surrenders his own integrity, nor renounces his allegiance to God. Not that his words are blameless, but the wrong ⁱⁿ them belongs to the infirmity rather than to the corruption of man's nature. Shadows of dark superstition (e.g. v. 8) pass over Job's spirit, and give a form to his complaints, but they are from without, and find no abiding place in his heart. It must be observed that some of his very strongest expressions have been adopted by prophets and great saints, and by the King of Saints Himself.

IV. On the principle laid down by Eliphaz and his friends, see Introd. p. 3.

2. *If we assay &c.*] Or, "Should we speak a word to thee, wilt thou faint (see v. 5)? Yet who can refrain from speaking?" Eliphaz implies that his words must needs be hard for Job to bear.

3, 4. These words justify Job's own de-

- 5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest;
It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.
- 6 *Is not this* thy fear, ^athy confidence,
Thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?
- 7 Remember, I pray thee, ^cwho ever perished, being innocent?
Or where were the righteous cut off?
- 8 Even as I have seen, ^dthey that plow iniquity,
And sow wickedness, reap the same.
- 9 By the blast of God they perish,
And ^eby the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.
- 10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion,
And ^fthe teeth of the young lions, are broken.
- 11 ^gThe old lion perisheth for lack of prey,
And the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.
- 12 Now a thing was ^hsecretly brought to me,
And mine ear received a little thereof.
- 13 ⁱIn thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,
- 14 Fear ^jcame upon me, and ^ktrembling,
Which made ^lall my bones to shake.
- 15 Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up:
- 16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof:
An ^mimage was before mine eyes,
ⁿThere was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,
- 17 ^oShall mortal man be more just than God?
Shall a man be more pure than his maker?
- 18 Behold, he ^pput no trust in his servants;
^qAnd his angels he charged with folly:
- ¹ That is, *by his anger*: as Isai. 30. 33. See Ex 15. 8. ch. 1. 19. & 15. 30
² Heb. *by stealth*.
³ Heb. *met me*.
⁴ Heb. *the multitude of*
⁵ Or, *I heard a still voice*.
⁶ Or, *nor in his angels, in whom he put light*.
⁷ ch. 1. 1.
⁸ Prov. 3. 26.
⁹ Ps. 37. 25.
¹⁰ Ps. 7. 14.
¹¹ Prov. 22. 8.
¹² Hos. 10. 13.
¹³ Gal. 6. 7, 8.
¹⁴ Ps. 58. 6.
¹⁵ Ps. 34. 10.
¹⁶ ch. 33. 15.
¹⁷ Hab. 3. 16.
¹⁸ ch. 9. 2.
¹⁹ ch. 15. 15.
²⁰ & 25. 5.
²¹ 2 Pet. 2. 4.

fence of his character (xxix. 15, 16, 25. xxxi. 16-21, 29-32).

5. *faintest*] The same word as "be grieved" (v. 2). In both cases it denotes undue depression of spirit.

6. Some render: **Was not thy piety thy confidence? Thy hope, was not that also the integrity of thy ways?** The implication is, if Job's piety and integrity in the past were substantial, there ought to remain a certain expectation of deliverance, together with an unreserved submission to God's will.

8. Or, **So far as I have seen, those who plough evil, and sow trouble, reap it.** This is the oldest example of a figure which has been proverbial in all ages. Cp. marg. *reff.*

10-11. In the original, five different words are used for lions, illustrative of each stage of their growth and power. The object was to show that, in every stage of its development, guilt, especially the guilt of cruelty and oppression, brings ruin: it suggested the suspicion that Job, or still more probably his sons, had oppressed their neighbours and therefore suffered.

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12. Or, **Now unto me a word came stealthily**, like a thief's noiseless entrance at night.

A little] Or, a **whisper**; a low indistinct sound.

13. *In thoughts*] The word in the Heb., which occurs only here and in xx. 2, means doubtful, perplexed thoughts.

The moment at which the apparition came was in the dead stillness of night, when Eliphaz was just waking up from a deep but troubled sleep, the mind full of some wild half-forgotten dream.

17. The voice answers the inward question, What account can be given of the apparent inequalities of God's ways? Only that every man is essentially unjust in His sight, and therefore liable to punishment. Eliphaz seems to represent himself as having once been beset with doubts, which were cleared up by a revelation so dim and mysterious in its form as to be scarcely distinguishable from the inner movements of his consciousness.

18. God knows that even His immediate attendants, the Angels, have not His entire confidence; that they are liable to err (error,

C.

* ch. 15. 26.
 o 2 Cor. 4. 7.
 & 5. 1.

p Ps. 90. 5, 6.

q Ps. 39. 11.
 & 49. 14.
 r ch. 36. 12.

- 19 *How much less in them that dwell in ^ohouses of clay,
 Whose foundation is in the dust,
 Which are crushed before the moth?
 20 ^pThey are ¹destroyed from morning to evening:
 They perish for ever without any regarding it.
 21 ^qDoth not their excellency which is in them go away? *
^rThey die, even without wisdom.

CHAP. 5. CALL now, if there be any that will answer thee;
 And to which of the saints wilt thou ²turn?

2 For wrath killeth the foolish man,
 And ³envy slayeth the silly one.

3 ^aI have seen the foolish taking root:
 But suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4 ^bHis children are far from safety,
 And they are crushed in the gate, ^cneither is there any to deliver
 them.

5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up,
 And taketh it even out of the thorns,
 And ^dthe robber swalloweth up their substance.

6 Although ^eaffliction cometh not forth of the dust,
 Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

7 Yet man is ^eborn unto ^etrouble,—as ^ethe sparks fly upward.

8 I would seek unto God,—and unto God would I commit my
 cause:

¹ Heb. *beaten in pieces.*
² Or, look?

³ Or, indignation.
⁴ Or, iniquity.
⁵ Or, labour.

⁶ Heb. *the sons of the burn-
 ing coal lift up to fly.*

rather than “folly”); that left to themselves they might fall, as some have already fallen.

19. *houses of clay*] i.e. earthly bodies; an allusion to Gen. ii. 7. Cp. marg. ref.

The words are important, as teaching the duality of man's nature, a spirit dwelling in an earthly tabernacle, liable to destruction from the meanest external causes.

20. *from morning to evening*] i.e. in a day: a sudden and complete destruction. Cp. Isai. xxx. 13.

21. *excellency*] i.e. the spiritual principle, which is not destroyed but removed. The word in the original probably means the cord which fastens a tent, an apt figure of the soul which sustains the fleshly tabernacle. This passage, like numberless others in the Old Testament, leaves the question of the continuance of personal consciousness untouched, but is perfectly reconcilable with that truth, and indeed prepares the way for the revelation of it.

without wisdom] i.e. without having taken God's previous visitations to heart. Cp. marg. ref. and Ps. xc. 12; Prov. x. 21.

V. 1. It may be inferred from this verse that the invocation of saints or Angels was not unknown in the patriarch's time (see Introd. p. 9), but Eliphaz distinctly affirms its inutility in the case when a man is not reconciled with God; if he be reconciled, it would of course be needless.

2. The connexion of thought is this: nothing can be done for Job in his then state

of mind: his wrath (iii. 1–10) indicates folly or depravity; and can have no end but destruction; his envy (iii. 14–19) is sinful infatuation.

3. Eliphaz supports his saying by an example: he has seen such a “foolish man” settled for a time, and outwardly prosperous, but the sudden destruction of his house was a proof of God's anger, and therefore of the man's ungodliness, and he cursed him.

4. *His children*] A reference to the death of Job's children. The result of a bad man's ruin is that his children are involved in it; they are exposed to every kind of danger; are broken to pieces by litigations in the gate (Prov. xxii. 22), where the courts of justice were held (xxix. 7, xxxi. 21), and find none to take up their cause as advocate or intercessor: a terrible picture of the misery which at all times in the East has fallen upon the orphans of criminal or suspected parents.

5. *out of the thorns*] i.e. the plunderers are not stopped by the thorny hedges. The word occurs only here and in Prov. xxii. 5.

7. Man inherits trouble as the portion of his corrupt nature, though it is only brought into activity by his own sin (iv. 8).

as the sparks fly upward] Lit. “and children of flame fly on high:” the meaning is, the tendency of man is to suffer trouble, as that of fiery natures is to fly upwards.

8. *I*] Rather, *I however*. Our Version omits the word which marks a transition in

- 9 ¹Which doeth great things ¹and unsearchable;
²Marvellous things ²without number:
 10 ³Who giveth rain upon the earth,
 And sendeth waters upon the ³fields:
 11 ⁴To set up on high those that be low;
 That those which mourn may be exalted to safety.
 12 ⁵He disappointeth the devices of the crafty,
 So that their hands ⁴cannot perform *their* enterprise.
 13 ⁶He taketh the wise in *their* own craftiness:
 And the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.
 14 ⁷They ⁵meet with darkness in the daytime,
 And grope ⁶in the noonday as in the night.
 15 But ⁸he saveth the poor from the sword,
 From their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.
 16 ⁹So the poor hath hope,—and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.
 17 ¹⁰Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth:
 Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:
 18 ¹¹For he maketh sore, and bindeth up:
 He woundeth, and his hands make whole.
 19 ¹²He shall deliver thee in six troubles:
 Yea, in seven ¹³there shall no evil touch thee.
 20 ¹⁴In famine he shall redeem thee from death:
 And, in war ¹⁵from the power of the sword.
 21 ¹⁶Thou shalt be hid ¹⁷from the scourge of the tongue:
 Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.
 22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh:
¹⁸Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
 23 ¹⁹For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field:
 And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.
 24 And thou shalt know ²⁰that thy tabernacle *shall be in peace*;

¹ Heb. *and* there is no search.

² Heb. *till* there be no number.

³ Heb. *outplaces*.

⁴ Or, *cannot perform any thing*.

⁵ Or, *run into*.

⁶ Heb. *from the hands*.

⁷ Or, *when the tongue scourgeth*.

⁸ Or, *that peace is thy tabernacle*.

¹ Ps. 40. 5.
 & 72. 18.
 Rom. 11. 33.
² Ps. 65. 9, 10.
 Jer. 5. 24.
 Acts 14. 17.
³ 1 Sam. 2. 7
 Ps. 113. 7.
⁴ Neh. 4. 15.
 Ps. 33. 10.
 Isai. 8. 10.
⁵ Ps. 9. 15.

⁶ Deut. 28. 29.
 Isai. 59. 10.
 Amos 8. 9.
⁷ Ps. 35. 10.

⁸ 1 Sam. 2. 9.
 Ps. 107. 42.
⁹ Ps. 94. 12.
 Prov. 3. 11.
 Heb. 12. 5.
 Jam. 1. 12.
 Rev. 3. 19.
¹⁰ Deut. 32. 39.
 1 Sam. 2. 6.
 Isai. 30. 26.
 Hos. 6. 1.
¹¹ Ps. 34. 19.
 Prov. 24. 16.
 1 Cor. 10. 13.
¹² Ps. 91. 10.
¹³ Ps. 33. 19.
 & 37. 19.
¹⁴ Ps. 31. 20.
¹⁵ Isai. 11. 9.
 Ezek. 34. 25.
¹⁶ Ps. 91. 12.
 Hos. 2. 18.

the discourse. Job had complained of God that He had hedged him in (iii. 23); Eliphaz states the only right course for a sufferer, but with a sting in the implication that Job had not given himself unreservedly into God's hand.

9. *unsearchable*] A point of the highest importance: the cause of the visitation may be hidden, and deliverance may seem impossible, but both the secret and the power are with God (cp. ix. 10, xxxvii. 5).

10. *again*] The first thought of a dweller in the East; rain is the type of all blessings, especially of restoration to life. In the Koran ¹⁹ is repeatedly adduced as the figurative representation, and almost as the proof of the general resurrection. See marg. ref.

12. *crafty*] Eliphaz seems to insinuate that Job's apparent wisdom might be its mere counterfeit, viz. craft, like that of the serpent (Gen. iii. 1). St. Paul quotes this (1 Cor. iii. 19) as expressing a general truth: the error of Eliphaz was not in the sentiment but in its application to Job. It is remarkable that in the two passages in

which St. Paul quotes the Book of Job he does not follow the Septuagint. It has been shown (1) that the Apostle had most probably a different version; and (2) that the LXX. version of Job was little known.

enterprise] The Hebrew word which is frequent in Prov. and Job, means properly soundness, that which is real and substantial, or the quality of mind which corresponds to it, sound practical sense. Thus the meaning is, their hands can perform nothing that is desirable or substantial, a sense fairly expressed by the word "*enterprise*."

15-17. If Job be an innocent sufferer, God's dealing assures him of deliverance: and since no affliction comes without an object it must be a benefit to those who submit to it, and take it as a correction.

from their mouth] Several MSS. have a preferable reading "*from the sword of their mouth*," i.e. from calumnies and evil words (cp. Ps. lvii. 4, lix. 7).

19. *no evil*] i.e. no real evil, evil without hope or remedy.

24 &c. Job is promised the exact reverse

- And thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not ¹sin.
 * Ps. 112. 2. 25 Thou shalt know also that ^vthy seed *shall be* ²great,
 * Ps. 72. 16. And thine offspring ^aas the grass of the earth.
 * Prov. 9. 11. 26 ^aThou shalt come to *thy* grave in a full age,
 & 10. 27. Like as a shock of corn ³cometh in in his season.
 * Ps. 111. 2. 27 Lo this, we have ^bsearched it, so it *is*;
 Hear it, and know thou *it* ⁴for thy good.

CHAP. 6. BUT Job answered and said,

- 2 O that my grief were thoroughly weighed,
 And my calamity ⁵laid in the balances together!
 * Prov. 27. 3. 3 For now it would be heavier ^athan the sand of the sea:
 Therefore ⁶my words are swallowed up.
 * Ps. 38. 2. 4 ^bFor the arrows of the Almighty are within me,
 The poison whereof drinketh up my spirit:
 * Ps. 88. 15, 16. ^cThe terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.
 5 Doth the wild ass bray ^cwhen he hath grass?
 Or loweth the ox over his fodder?
 6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?
 Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?
 7 The things *that* my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.
 8 O that I might have my request;
 And that God would grant *me* ⁸the thing that I long for!
 * 1 Kin. 19. 4. 9 Even ^dthat it would please God to destroy me;
 That he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

¹ Or, err.

² Or, much.

³ Heb. ascendeth.

⁴ Heb. for thyself, Prov. 9. 12.

⁵ Heb. lifted up.

⁶ That is, I want words to

express my grief, Ps. 77.

⁷ Heb. at grass.

⁸ Heb. my expectation.

of all that he had experienced. It must have sounded like a bitter mockery, and as such he resents it.

26. cometh in] Or, cometh up, see marg. Threshing-floors were generally on hills (cp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 18).

27. for thy good] Lit. as in the marg. Eliphaz is confident that no man of sense can come to any other conclusion.

VI. 2. grief] Or, wrath, the same word which Eliphaz used in v. 2. It was this "wrath" which made Eliphaz doubt the integrity of Job. Job answers (v. 2-7) that it is not out of proportion with his "calamity," i.e. his abysmal boundless misery.

in the balances] The weighing of words and thoughts in scales belongs to the remotest antiquity. In the Egyptian Ritual the day of weighing words is a common term for the day of judgment.

3. are swallowed up] More probably "are idle" (LXX.). Job admits that his words are blameworthy, but excusable as the overflowings of natural sorrow.

4. drinketh up my spirit] i.e. the poison reaches the springs of life, absorbs all power of thought: this is Job's real excuse for his vehemence. Modern commentators generally prefer, "whose poison my spirit drinketh up." This verse is a second de-

fence; it accounts for the rebellious struggles as instinctive movements of a soul assailed by a host of troubles.

5. Job argues that his words are natural expressions of feeling, like the sounds which are uttered by animals to denote their wants.

6. Proverbial expressions. If that which is merely insipid and tasteless is naturally disliked, much more is an expression of loathing and disgust justified when the food offered is poisonous.

the white of an egg] Geese and ducks were kept by the Egyptians at the remotest period, and the egg of the ostrich was familiar to the nomads of Arabia (cp. xxxix. 15).

7. Rather, My soul refuseth to touch, they are as loathsome food to me. The sense of the second clause is most probably, "the evils which have come upon me are like diseased or poisonous food." How then, Job means, can I receive it without such expressions of grief or wrath, as appear to Eliphaz proofs of sin and unpardonable folly?

8-10. Eliphaz had represented death as the last punishment (v. 2), Job declares that it is his only hope. As yet there is no indication of a hope beyond death.

- 10 Then should I yet have comfort ;
 Yea, I would harden myself in sorrow : let him not spare ;
 For 'I have not concealed the words of / the Holy One.
- 11 What, *is* my strength, that I should hope ?
 And what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life ?
- 12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones ?—or *is* my flesh ¹of brass ?
- 13 *Is* not my help in me ?—and is wisdom driven quite from me ?
- 14 ²To him that is afflicted pity *should be shewed* from his friend ;
 But he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.
- 15 ³My brethren have dealt deceitfully *as* a brook,
 And ⁴as the stream of brooks they pass away ;
- 16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice,
 And wherein the snow is hid :
- 17 What time they wax warm, ⁵they vanish :
⁶When it is hot, they are ⁵consumed out of their place.
- 18 The paths of their way are turned aside ;
 They go to nothing, and perish.
- 19 The troops of ⁷Tema looked,
 The companies of ⁸Sheba waited for them.
- ¹ Heb. *bracen* ?
² Heb. *To him that melteth.*
³ Heb. *they are cut off.*
⁴ Heb. *in the heat thereof.*
⁵ Heb. *extinguished.*
⁶ Heb. *in the heat thereof.*

* Acts 20. 20.
 † Lev. 19. 2.
 Isai. 57. 15.
 Hos. 11. 9.

* Prov. 17. 17.

* Ps. 38. 11.

* Jer. 15. 18.

* Gen. 25. 15.

* 1 Kin. 10. 1.

Ps. 72. 10.

* 41. 9.

Ezek. 27. 22.

23.

10. *harden myself...concealed*] Better, "exult"... "denied." The meaning may be more clearly expressed : **So would it still be my comfort, and in the midst of my unsparing anguish would I exult that I have not denied (i.e., renounced) the words of the Holy One.** This comfort is not merely that death will end his troubles, but that to the last he has the consciousness of having kept the faith. The words of the Holy One are the commands of God, however made known to man.

11-13. Job rejects the hope suggested by Eliphaz (v. 15-17), and will not listen to the possibility of restoration.

11. *that I should prolong my life*] Lit. "that I should stretch out my spirit," i.e. look forward with patience. Job sees no end to which he can possibly look forward with any hope, save that of dissolution.

13. Rather, **Am I not helpless? And is not soundness driven out from me?** The word rendered "wisdom" is that rendered "enterprise" in v. 12 (see note); this has been driven out by the terrors set in array against Job (v. 4).

14-20. Job, having disposed of the arguments urged by Eliphaz, now attacks his friends, first for their neglect of the first duty of friends, compassion for the afflicted (14-21); and then for their failure in argument.

14. The latter clause of the verse means either "should he forsake the fear of the Almighty," or "lest he forsake:" i.e. friends should above all things soothe a man's feelings lest he be driven to desperation. The word for "afflicted" is very graphic; it means "melted down," (see marg.).

15-20. The imagery of this passage is

taken from a land intersected by deep wadis dry in summer, and filled suddenly after storms by torrents from neighbouring heights. This corresponds most exactly with the descriptions of the Hauran. The simile is remarkably complete: when little needed the torrent overflows, when needed it disappears: in winter it does not fertilize, in summer it is dried up: nor is it merely useless; it deceives, alluring the traveller by the appearance of verdure, promising refreshment, and giving none. Such were the friends of Job with their noisy grief and vehement gesticulations, and the absence of genuine sympathy. Cp. Isai. lviii. 11.

16. *blackish*] The winter is generally sharp in the Hauran, when the deep channels are filled with dark turbid torrents.

is hid] A true and graphic expression for the dissolving snow.

17. *consumed*] Or, **are dried up**, lit. as in the margin, "extinguished." Cp. xviii. 5, 6.

18. *The paths &c.*] i.e. the torrent winds a tortuous course, part of it is dried up at once, part finds its way into the desert, where it speedily evaporates and vanishes. Modern commentators generally adopt a different rendering: "the caravans turn aside from their way, diverge, that is, from the regular track, in order to supply themselves with water from the wady, but finding it empty, they go up into the desert, and perish."

19. *The troops*] The caravans. Tema and Sheba may represent travellers from opposite quarters; all perish alike when drawn out of their way by the false appearance of water. Tema was a tribe in the

- ^a Jer. 14. 3. 20 They were ^mconfounded because they had hoped ;
They came thither, and were ashamed.
- ^a ch. 13. 4. 21 ¹For now ^aye are ²nothing ;
Ye see *my* casting down, and ^aare afraid.
- ^a Ps. 38. 11. 22 Did I say, Bring unto me ?
Or, Give a reward for me of your substance ?
- 23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand ?
Or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty ?
- 24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue :
And cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
- 25 How forcible are right words !
But what doth your arguing reprove ?
- 26 Do ye imagine to reprove words,
And the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are* as wind ?
- 27 Yea, ³ye overwhelm the fatherless,
And ye ^pdig a pit for your friend.
- ^a Ps. 57. 6. 28 Now therefore be content, look upon me ;
For *it is* ⁴evident unto you if I lie.
- ^a ch. 17. 10. 29 ^aReturn, I pray you, let it not be iniquity ;
Yea, return again, my righteousness is ⁵in it.
- 30 Is there iniquity in my tongue ?
Cannot ⁶my taste discern perverse things ?
- ^a ch. 14. 5, 13, 14. **CHAP. 7.** *IS there not* ^{7a}an appointed time to man upon earth ?
Are not his days also like the days of an hireling ?
- ¹ Or, *For now ye are like to them.* Heb. *to it.* ³ Heb. *ye cause to fall upon.* ⁶ Heb. *my palate,* ch. 12. 11. & 34. 3.
- ² Heb. *not.* ⁴ Heb. *before your face.* ⁷ Or, *a warfare.* ⁵ That is, *in this matter.*

northern district of the Arabian desert, descended from Tema, a son of Ishmael (marg. ref.). The caravans of the Ishmaelites were in constant communication with Egypt (see Gen. xxxvii. 25). On Sheba see i. 15 note.

20. *were ashamed*] The caravans were ashamed to have been misled, as Job was ashamed to have calculated upon comfort from his friends.

21. *ye are nothing*] i.e. "ye are come to nought, like the dried-up torrent." This is better than the rendering in the margin.

24. Job demands that since his friends have neither helped nor comforted him, they should at least point out in what his assumed guilt consisted.

25. *arguing*] Or, "reproving." What doth your reproving reprove ? What is it that ye reprove who reprove me ? What is the point at which your accusation is aimed ?

26. *and the speeches &c.*] Or, **but the words of the despairing are for the wind.** Words wrung from a man in a desperate condition had, as Job would argue, no bearing upon the question of his guilt : they followed, and could not therefore have provoked, the visitation ; they were merely uttered to the wind, borne away by it, and left no trace.

27. *Yea, ye overwhelm*] Rather, **Even on the orphan would ye cast lots :** i.e. ye are pitiless as creditors who take the children of a debtor after his death (see 2 K. iv. 1), casting lots for their several shares.

dig a pit] Or, more probably, "ye traffic," i.e. "make gain over a friend," turning his misery to profit, as an occasion for uttering wise saws, and thus ministering to your own self-righteousness.

28. Or, **And now do but look at me ; for I surely shall not lie to your face.** The expression is thoroughly characteristic of Job, conscious of his integrity, and believing that no one could look at him stedfastly and distrust him.

29. *let it not be iniquity*] Or, **let there not be iniquity** (unfairness and dishonesty) **in your judgment.** The latter clause may mean, try me over and over again, and you will but find me guiltless in the matter. Another reading, however, "And my answer—still there is righteousness in it"—gives a sense well adapted to the context.

30. *my taste*] The meaning is, my sense of right and wrong is not so far perverted that I cannot discern what is absolutely wicked. *perverse things*] Or, "wickedness ;" the Hebrew word, which occurs frequently in the Psalms, denotes utter and absolute wickedness ; wickedness that causes destruction. Others render the word "calamity," as in v. 2.

VII. This chapter marks another stage in the development of Job's innermost feelings. First (vv. 1-10) he repudiates altogether the hope of a possible restoration to life ; and then, claiming the right of unqualified complaining (vv. 11-21), enters

- 2 As a servant ¹earnestly desireth the shadow,
And as an hireling looketh for *the reward of his work* :
- 3 So am I made to possess ²months of vanity,
And wearisome nights are appointed to me.
- 4 When I lie down, I say,
When shall I arise, and ²the night be gone ?
And I am full of tossings to and fro
Unto the dawning of the day.
- 5 My flesh is ⁴clothed with worms and clods of dust ;
My skin is broken, and become loathsome.
- 6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
And are spent without hope.
- 7 O remember that ³my life is wind :
Mine eye ³shall no more ⁴see good.
- 8 The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more :
Thine eyes are upon me, and ⁵I am not.
- 9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away :
So ⁴he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.
- 10 He shall return no more to his house,
⁴Neither shall his place know him any more.
- 11 Therefore I will ⁴not refrain my mouth ;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit ;
I will ¹complain in the bitterness of my soul.
- 12 Am I a sea, or a whale,—that thou settest a watch over me ?
- 13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me,
My couch shall ease my complaint ;

¹ Heb. *gapeth after*.² Heb. *the evening be measured* ?³ Heb. *shall not return*.⁴ *to see*, that is, *to enjoy*.⁵ That is, *I can live no longer*.^b See ch. 29. 2.^c Deut. 28. 67. ch. 17. 12.^d Isai. 14. 11.^e ch. 9. 25.^f 18. 22.^g 17. 11.^h Ps. 90. 6.ⁱ & 102. 11.^j & 103. 15.^k & 144. 4.^l Isai. 38. 12.^m Jam. 4. 14.ⁿ Ps. 78. 39.^o & 89. 47.^p ch. 20. 9.^q 2 Sam. 12. 23.^r ch. 8. 18.^s & 20. 9.^t Ps. 103. 16.^u Ps. 39. 1, 9.^v & 40. 9.^w 1 Sam. 1. 10.^x ch. 10. 1.^y ch. 9. 27.

into direct expostulation with God. Job's fault is that of a man who fears and loves God, yet cannot understand His ways.

1. *an appointed time*] A time of service : specially, but not exclusively military service, to which a man is bound for an appointed time (cp. marg. ref.). Job argues that when the limits of life are reached, and the appointed work is done, a man may be justified in longing for the rest of the grave.

2. *earnestly &c.*] Or, *longeth for the shadow*, perhaps of eventide, bringing at once rest and refreshment.

3. *months of vanity*] The leprosy in its worst form lasts for years, consuming the frame gradually, but without cessation until death comes.

4. The extreme suffering at night is noted as specially characteristic of elephantiasis.

5. An exact description of the symptoms of the disease. Maggots breed rapidly in the mouldering flesh ; rough clods are formed by the dry swollen skin. When fully formed, the lumps burst, the skin falls off in masses, and the body is covered by discharge.

is broken and become loathsome] *Stiffens and bursts again*. The first word denotes violent contraction, the latter, purulent discharge.

8. No stronger expressions can be found

to express the certainty that death will be followed by no restoration to life in this world ; but the conviction does not touch the question of life with and in God in another world ; a question still to be raised, and, once raised, as surely solved.

9. *the grave*] Or, *Sheol*, the world below, the world of the departed (cp. Gen. xxxvii. 35). It is important to keep in mind that this word is distinguished from the grave.

10. The Egyptians believed, that if a man were justified in Hades, and had learned thoroughly certain chapters of the Ritual during life, he would have power to come forth any day at his wish and "return to his own house."

12. Job complains that he, capable of understanding and obeying an appeal to conscience, should be dealt with as the sea and its monsters, kept only from ravaging the earth by fixed laws or severe restraint. The word "sea" is specially used of the Nile (Isai. xix. 5), whose overflowing was carefully watched, and, though most welcome, was confined by dykes and reservoirs ; and the word for "whale" (*tannin*) is applied frequently to the crocodile, the recognized type of fierce and untameable monsters. *Tanem* is in fact an Egyptian word with a similar meaning (see Exod. vii. 9 note). The constant reference to Egyptian imagery in this Book should be noted.

- 14 Then thou scarest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me through visions:
15 So that my soul chooseth strangling,
And death rather ¹than my life.
* ch. 10. 1. 16 "I loathe it; I would not live alway:
* ch. 10. 20. "Let me alone; for ²my days are vanity.
* 14. 6. 17 "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him?
Ps. 39. 13. And that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?
* Ps. 62. 9. 18 And that thou shouldst visit him every morning,
* Ps. 8. 4. & And try him every moment?
144. 3. 19 How long wilt thou not depart from me,
Heb. 2. 6. Nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?
* Ps. 36. 6. 20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, *O thou preserver of
men?
* ch. 16. 12. Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee,
Ps. 21. 12. So that I am a burden to myself?
Lam. 3. 12. 21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression,
And take away mine iniquity?
For now shall I sleep in the dust;
And thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.
- CHAP. 8. THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How long wilt thou speak these things?
And how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?
3 "Doth God pervert judgment?
Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
¹ Heb. than my bones.

14. Melancholy dreams are common symptoms in elephantiasis.

15. *strangling*] The sensation of choking or suffocation is also noted as a symptom of the disease. Job prefers even this suffering to the misery of such dreams.

my life] **my bones**, as in the margin; that is, this worn-out frame, this mere skeleton of my former self.

16. *let me alone*] Or, **cease from me**, depart from me: a great word, which implies that the continuance of life depends on God's Presence; that withdrawn, comes death (see Ps. civ. 29).

are vanity] Or, a mere breath, a passing vapour.

19. *till I swallow down &c.*] A proverbial expression, common in Arabic, for a moment of time, equivalent to "the twinkling of an eye." It may be here suggested by the feeling of suffocation in elephantiasis (see v. 15 note).

20, 21. The last objection is dealt with here:—"Granted that I have committed some sin, what then? Is it in my power now to make any compensation, to live and act for God's service?"

20. *a mark*] A butt or target at which the "arrows of the Almighty" (vi. 4) are aimed. *a burden to myself*] Another reading is, "As though I were a burden to Thee," an object which God would fain cast off: but the reading and translation of cur A.V. are probably correct.

21. Job, conscious of integrity and piety,

cannot understand why he should be an object of God's wrath, why his sins of infirmity should not be pardoned. He and his friends alike falsely regarded his afflictions as indications of God's displeasure; they at once concluding that his refusal to submit proved radical unsoundness, while he is driven to utter perplexity and hopelessness. The solution of the problem involved two conditions: first, the certainty that all punishments falling on God's true servants are directed by His wisdom and controlled by His power; and, secondly, the knowledge of a future state, in which the living Redeemer will rectify all inequalities. Each step in the discussion brings the necessity of such a solution nearer.

in the morning] The idiom simply expresses earnest or careful seeking (Prov. viii. 17). It does not refer to the last day.

VIII. The argument of Bildad rests upon the same principle as that of Eliphaz. He (v. 1-7) assumes the guilt of Job's children, and the future restoration of the patriarch on the supposition of his innocence.

2. *like a strong wind*] Rather, **for the words of thy mouth are a strong wind**, violent and unreasoning: an allusion to vi. 26.

3. Bildad draws out the thought which underlay Job's complaints, or followed from them logically. "Judgment" denotes the act, "justice" the principle. Cp. marg. *ref.*

- 4 If ^bthy children have sinned against him,
And he hath cast them away ¹for their transgression ;
- 5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes,
And make thy supplication to the Almighty ;
- 6 If thou ^awere pure and upright ;
Surely now he would awake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.
- 7 Though thy beginning was small,
Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.
- 8 For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age,
And prepare ^cthyself to the search of their fathers :
- 9 (For ^awe are but of yesterday, and know ²nothing,
Because our days upon earth are a shadow :)
- 10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee,
And utter words out of their heart ?
- 11 Can the rush grow up without mire ?
Can the flag grow without water ?
- 12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down,
It withereth before any other herb.
- 13 So are the paths of all that forget God ;
And the ^dhypocrite's hope shall perish :
- 14 Whose hope shall be cut off,
And whose trust shall be ^aa spider's web
- 15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand :
He shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

^b ch. i. 5, 18.

^c ch. 5. 8.
& 11. 13.
& 22, 23, &c.

^d Dent. 4. 32.
& 32. 7.
ch. 15. 18.
^e Gen. 47. 9.
1 Chr. 29. 15.
ch. 7. 6.
Ps. 38. 5.
& 144. 4.

^f Ps. 129. 6.
Jer. 17. 6.

^g ch. 11. 20.
& 18. 14.
& 27. 8.
Ps. 112. 10.
Prov. 10. 28.
^h ch. 27. 18.

¹ Heb. in the hand of their transgression.

² Heb. not.

³ Heb. a spider's house, Isai. 59. 5, 6.

4. for their transgression] See the marg. rendering ; i.e. God abandoned them to the consequences of their guilt : perhaps a reference to i. 19.

5. "Thou" is emphatic ; it marks the contrast between Job and his children.

Two just conditions of restoration are proposed in this and the following verse : prayer to God and personal innocence : but the proposal implies that Job had not prayed in a spirit of submission, and the destruction of his children involved suffering, incompatible, in Bildad's mind, with the supposition of Job's innocence.

6. awake for thee] The waking up for defence of the righteous is frequently attributed to God (cp. Ps. xxxv. 23).

7. Job's former estate, great as it really was, would be but small compared with that to which he would be raised on his restoration.

8-19. An appeal to antiquity in proof that God never abandons the righteous or gives permanent prosperity to the evil-doers. Bildad quotes old sayings, which may have been preserved by oral tradition : but inscriptions and papyri inculcating moral lessons existed in Egypt at a much earlier age than that of Job, or even of Abraham ; and Bildad's speech indicates special familiarity with Egypt (see v. 11 note).

8. prepare thyself &c. Or, attend to the research of their fathers ; i.e. the investigations of those who in length of days

and wisdom far transcended their descendants.

9. a shadow] Cp. xiv. 2 ; Ps. cii. 11. The reason for the inferiority of Job's contemporaries in experience and wisdom is found in the longevity of the early patriarchal age.

10. out of their heart] The seat of deep convictions founded on sound knowledge : as contrasted with those of Job (v. 2).

11. The words "rush," "grow," and "flag" here and elsewhere used in connexion with Egypt, are Egyptian, and the proverb is probably Egyptian.

The points of comparison are two ; the luxuriant growth of the water-plants, and their sudden and complete decay ; having no substance in themselves, they perish instantly when the water is withdrawn. So the heaviest calamities of Job were not the result of human agencies but of a Divine visitation.

13. are the paths] More probably, according to another reading :—"is the latter end." hypocrite] The word, frequent in Job (see marg. refl.), means rather a profane, godless man.

14. web] rather house ; a comparison of sudden prosperity resting on no secure foundation. The next verse brings out another point of resemblance with Job in the desperate and useless struggles of the creature to keep together its shattered domicile.

- 16 He *is* green before the sun,
And his branch shooteth forth in his garden.
17 His roots are wrapped about the heap,
And seeth the place of stones.
^c ch. 7. 10. 18 'If he destroy him from his place,
& 20. 9. Then *it* shall deny him, *saying*, I have not seen thee.
Ps. 37. 36. 19 Behold, this *is* the joy of his way,
& Ps. 113. 7. And ^k out of the earth shall others grow.
20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man,
Neither will he ^h help the evil doers :
21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing,—and thy lips with ² re-
joicing.
ⁱ Ps. 25. 20. 22 They that hate thee shall be ^l clothed with shame ;
& 109. 29. And the dwellingplace of the wicked ³ shall come to nought.

CHAP. 9. THEN Job answered and said,

- 2 I know *it is* so of a truth :
But how should a man be just ⁴ with God ?
^a Ps. 143. 2. 3 If he will contend with him,
Rom. 3. 20. He cannot answer him one of a thousand.
^b ch. 38. 5. 4 ^b He *is* wise in heart, and mighty in strength :
Who hath hardened *himself* against him, and hath prospered ?
5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not :
Which overturneth them in his anger.
^c Isai. 2. 19, 21. 6 Which ^c shaketh the earth out of her place,
Hag. 2. 6, 21. And ^a the pillars thereof tremble.
Heb. 12. 26. 7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not ;
^d ch. 26. 11. And scaleth up the stars.

¹ Heb. take the ungodly by the hand.

² Heb. shouting for joy.
³ Heb. shall not be.

⁴ Or, before God ?

16. The hypocrite is here compared to a parasitical weed, green, full of sap at sunrise, spreading itself rapidly over its garden.

17 Or, Its roots are twined about a heap, it seeth a house of stones. The weed is rooted in a heap of stones, in which it seems to have a perfectly safe home, a house of stones (contrast note, v. 14).

18. *he* [i.e. God. Destruction comes sooner or later upon the useless and noisome weed, from his place] Cp. the words of Job in vii. 10.

it shall deny him] As though the very stones were ashamed of their occupant ; it was a disgrace to the place where it grew.

19. Such is the result of its triumphant career. Removal is needed to make way for a better race.

20. *help the evil doers*] Or, as in margin ; God will not hold them up firmly, though He may leave them for a season in a state of apparent prosperity.

21. *Till he fill* [i.e. If Job be perfect (v. 20, cp. i. 1) then God will not leave him till He fill &c.

IX. 2. *of a truth*] i.e. Of course I do not pretend to be able to prove that God is unjust or that I am just.

3. *If he will contend*] Or, If a man should desire to contend with Him. If man should wish to plead his own cause, he will not be

able to meet one out of a thousand charges, which infinite wisdom might adduce, and infinite power would punish. Job thus admits a relative and inherent injustice or sinfulness in himself, but only that which he has in common with his fellow-men, thereby vindicating himself from the charge of special guilt, supposed to be demonstrated by his terrible punishment.

5-13. In this grand description of God's majesty Job's immediate object is to establish the utter hopelessness of attempts to explain and vindicate His ways.

5. *and they know not*] i.e. the mountains are removed suddenly and unexpectedly, as by an earthquake.

in his anger] An insinuation unjust and dangerous. To look on natural phenomena, of which the causes are hidden, as indications of special emotions in the Godhead, is to open the way for erroneous conceptions of God's dealings with His creatures.

6. *pillars*] The vast mountain-ranges, whose roots are regarded as the foundation of continents, and on whose summits the firmament appears to rest.

7. *the sun*] The Hebrew word is archaic, and occurs rarely.

riseth not] Rather, "shineth not ;" the Heb. applies specially to the light of the sun. *scaleth up*] With dense clouds.

- 8 ^aWhich alone spreadeth out the heavens,
And treadeth upon the ¹waves of the sea.
9 ²Which maketh ²Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south.
10 ²Which doeth great things past finding out ;
Yea, and wonders without number.
11 ³Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not :
He passeth on also, but I perceive him not.
12 ⁴Behold, he taketh away, ³who can hinder him ?
Who will say unto him, What doest thou ?
13 *If* God will ¹not withdraw his anger,
²The 'proud helpers do stoop under him.
14 How much less shall I answer him,
And choose out my words to reason with him ?
15 ¹Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer,
But I would make supplication to my judge.
16 If I had called, and he had answered me ;
Yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.
17 For he breaketh me with a tempest,
And multiplieth my wounds ^mwithout cause.
18 He will not suffer me to take my breath,
But filleth me with bitterness.
19 If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong :
And if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead ?

¹ Heb. heights.

² Heb. Ash, Cesil, and Cimah.

³ Heb. who can turn him away? ch. 11. 10.

⁴ Heb. helpers of pride, or, strength.

^a Gen. 1. 6.
Ps. 104. 2, 3.

^f Gen. 1. 16.
ch. 38. 31, &c.
Amos 5. 8.
^g Ps. 71. 15.

^h ch. 23. 8, 9
& 35. 14.

ⁱ Isai. 45. 9.
Jer. 18. 6.
Rom. 9. 20.

^k Isai. 30. 7.

^l ch. 10. 15.

^m ch. 2. 3.
& 34. 6.

9. *Arcturus*] The constellation called "the Bear."

Orion] The original word (*Cesil*) means "fool." There may be an allusion in it to the old mythological tradition, which probably represented the leader of rebellion against God as suspended in heaven, bound in chains, an object of scorn and of warning to the Universe.

Pleiades] The Hebrew, as also the modern Arabic, name for this constellation means a heap or group of stars.

chambers of the south] The vast spaces and constellations of the southern heavens.

10. Job accepts and repeats the words of Eliphaz (v. 9), but not with the conclusion. God's unsearchableness does not in his mind justify the assertion of the absolute rectitude of His judgments, if this life be taken as the whole; it simply makes discussion useless.

11. *he passeth on also*] Again the words of Eliphaz (v. 15), but Job receives no answer or intimation; all is dark, fathomless, and inexplicable in the divine visitation.

13. Rather, God withdraweth not His wrath, the helpers of Rahab are prostrate under Him. The most probable explanation of the last clause is that Job refers (as in xxvi. 12, 13) to the ancient belief that a monstrous being was overthrown together with his helpers in a struggle against God. This belief, common to the Egyptian and the oldest Indian traditions, and held by nations which from the remotest period were separ-

ated from each other, is more or less a distorted reminiscence of the earliest revelation to man; nor is there any reason to suppose that Job derived it from any source but that of patriarchal tradition. Others take Rahab as the name of a constellation, and the cause to represent the punishment of the monster, fastened like Orion to heaven.

15. *my judge*] Or, "my adversary"; the person who contends with me in judgment. Job means that, were he conscious of perfect innocence, the might and wisdom of his adversary would leave him no option but supplication (cp. viii. 5).

16. The meaning is: "If God really answered my appeal, and permitted me to plead my cause against Him, I could not rely upon His hearing me; for that would involve an inconceivable condescension." Job trenches on the grievous sin of imputing to God a real disregard of justice (v. 17). Such words must be taken as partly the wanderings of a maddened and embittered spirit (vi. 3), partly as the struggles of a perplexed mind.

19. The verse probably means:—"Is it a question of strength, who is mighty? (The Almighty answers) Behold! it is I. Is it a question of judgment? (God again speaks), Who will appoint Me a day?"

20-24. From the certain truth that all men are guilty in God's sight, Job draws the false inference that good and bad are involved in one condemnation.

- 20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me:
If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.
- 21 *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul:*
I would despise my life.
- 22 This is one thing, therefore I said it,
 *Eccles. 9, 2, 3. "He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.
 Ezek. 21. 3.
- 23 If the scourge slay suddenly,
 He will laugh at the trial of the innocent.
- 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked:
 *2 Sam. 15. 30. "He covereth the faces of the judges thereof;
 & 19. 4. Jer. 14. 4. If not, where, and who is he?
 *ch. 7. 6, 7.
- 25 Now ¹my days are swifter than a post:
 They flee away, they see no good.
- 26 They are passed away as the ¹²swift ships:
 *Hab. 1. 8. "As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.
 *ch. 7. 13.
- 27 "If I say, I will forget my complaint,
 I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:
- *Ps. 119. 120. 28 "I am afraid of all my sorrows,
 "Ex. 20. 7. I know that thou 'wilt not hold me innocent.
- "Jer. 2. 22. 29 *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?*
 30 "If I wash myself with snow water,
 And make my hands never so clean;
 31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch,
 And mine own clothes shall ³abhor me.
- *Eccles. 6. 10. 32 For ²he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him,
 Isai. 45. 9. Jer. 49. 19. Rom. 9. 20. ¹ Heb. *ships of desire.* ² Or, *ships of Ebeh.* ³ Or, *make me to be abhorred.*

20. *mine own mouth*] i.e. God would detect flaws in any arguments I might use, and indications or proofs of guilt in any assertions of innocence.

21. The verse may be understood to mean:—"I am guiltless; my integrity is an immovable fact. I understand not my own feelings, my own nature; I care not for myself; I am indifferent to any punishment which may be inflicted upon me; I **abhor my life**. It seems a state of mind incompatible with faith in God, but it does but bring Job nearer to the only true solution of the problem (1 Cor. xv. 19). Holy Scripture knows nothing of that stoic grandeur of self-reliance which can dispense with the assurance of God's love.

22. *This is one thing*] i.e. It is one and the same thing with all; there is no difference whether a man be innocent or not. A terrible statement, but one which cannot be gainsaid, without reference to a future compensation.

23. *If the scourge slay suddenly*] i.e. If pestilence, famine, or war, fall suddenly on a land, destroying at once the guilty and the innocent.

the trial] i.e. not the "distress," but the perplexity, the **temptation** which besets them to question God's goodness and wisdom. Jerome says truly, "there is in the whole Book nothing harsher than this;" it is an outbreak of unutterable woe.

24. *he covereth*] So that they cannot discern between good and evil.

The second clause should be rendered, **If it be not He, who then is it?**

25-35. In his misery there comes (not indeed a hope, but) an aspiration for a **MEDIATOR**.

25. *post*] Lit. "a runner," i.e. couriers who convey despatches in the desert with proverbial rapidity. (Cp. 2 Chron. xxx. 6 note).

26. *swift ships*] Lit. "ships of Ebeh," i.e. probably "of reed," such as were used commonly in Egypt, and were famed for their speed (cp. Is. xviii. 2).

Job thus uses three similes to describe his condition. The swift runner by land, the swift bark by water, the eagle swooping upon its prey.

27. *my heaviness*] Lit. "my faces," that is, my gloomy, downcast looks.

29. *If I be wicked*] Rather, **I am to be guilty**, i.e. no other result but condemnation is to be looked for; guilty or innocent, I must be convicted, why then take trouble?

30. The last words should be rendered, "and make my hands **clean with lye**," i.e. potash (cp. Isai. i. 25; Jer. ii. 22).

31. *shall abhor me*] Job represents himself as thoroughly cleansed by his own conscience, but then cast by the Divine power and wisdom into a **faul pit**, an object so loathsome, that his own garments refuse to clothe him again.

- And we should come together in judgment.*
- 33 ¹Neither is there ²any ³daysman betwixt us,
That might lay his hand upon us both.
- 34 ⁴Let him take his rod away from me,
And let not his fear terrify me:
- 35 *Then would I speak, and not fear him;—⁵but it is not so with me.*
- CHAP. 10.** MY ⁶soul is ⁷weary of my life;
I will leave my complaint upon myself;
⁸I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
- 2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me;
Shew me ⁹wherefore thou contendest with me.
- 3 *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress,*
That thou shouldest despise ¹⁰the work of thine hands,
And shine upon the counsel of the wicked?
- 4 Hast thou eyes of flesh?—or ¹¹seest thou as man seeth?
- 5 *Are thy days as the days of man?—are thy years as man's days,*
- 6 That thou enquirest after mine iniquity,
And searchest after my sin?
- 7 ¹²Thou knowest that I am not wicked;
And *there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.*
- 8 ¹³Thine hands ¹⁴have made me
And fashioned me together round about;
Yet thou dost destroy me.
- 9 Remember, I beseech thee, that ¹⁵thou hast made me as the clay;
- 10 ¹⁶Hast thou not poured me out as milk,
And curdled me like cheese?
- 11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
- ¹ Heb. *one that should argue.*
² Or, *umpire.*
³ Heb. *but I am not so with myself.*
⁴ Or, *cut off while I live.*
⁵ Heb. *the labour of thine hands,* Ps. 139. 8. Isai. 64. 8.
⁶ Heb. *It is upon thy knowledge.*
⁷ Heb. *took pains about me.*
⁸ 1 Sam. 16. 7.
⁹ 1 Sam. 16. 7.
¹⁰ Ps. 139. 1, 2.
¹¹ Ps. 119. 73.
¹² Gen. 2. 7. & 3. 19. Isai. 64. 8.
¹³ Ps. 139. 14, 15, 16.

32-33. Two conditions are stated, without which true justice between God and man is impossible. God must become man; or, there must be a mediator between both, representing both, and fully empowered to arbitrate between them. For Christians the most striking feature of this Book is that it expresses the truest yearnings of the heart which are satisfied by the Saviour.

33. *daysman*] i.e. an umpire, empowered to decide the cause by mutual consent and "to lay hands," with authority to enforce the sentence and to compel submission. We know that "God hath committed all judgment to the Son," and that "because He is the Son of man;" this fulfilled an aspiration which was a true though unconscious prophecy.

For "neither" the LXX. read "would that there were" &c.

34. Or, **Who would remove His rod from me, so that His fear should not terrify me?** This suits the context, and represents truly the work of the Daysman.

35. The latter clause is better rendered in the margin, i.e. "I am not such a man in my own consciousness." Cp. 1 Cor. iv. 4.

X. 1-7. Job pleads for justice, on the

fourfold ground that he is God's creature, that God cannot be subject to human infirmities, that He knows Job's innocence, and that no other deliverer is conceivable.

1. *I will leave*] Or, "I will let loose my complaint over myself;" i.e. "I will say what my grief prompts without restraint." For "myself," the LXX. has "on Him," i.e. "I will give free course to my complaint concerning Him."

3. Job condenses three charges in this single verse; oppression of the innocent, disregard of His own work (cp. v. 8), and success granted to evildoers (cp. ix. 24).

4. The two words "flesh" and "man," are specially used to express human infirmity.

7. *Thou knowest*] Or, **Although Thou knowest.** A man who realizes God's knowledge of his heart, and finds in it a support and ground of confidence, and who, at the same time, looks for no other deliverer, "has the root of the matter in him." Cp. John xxi. 15-17.

10. The formation of the embryo is a mystery on which the Hebrew dwells with a deep and reverential awe (cp. marg. reff.)

And hast ¹fenced me with bones and sinews.

12 Thou hast granted me life and favour,

And thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

13 And these *things* hast thou hid in thine heart:

I know that this *is* with thee.

* Ps. 139. 1.

14 If I sin, then ^athou markest me,

And thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

† Isai. 3. 11.

15 If I be wicked, ⁱwoe unto me;

^kAnd *if* I be righteous, *yet* will I not lift up my head.

^k ch. 9. 12.

I am full of confusion; therefore ^lsee thou mine affliction;

^l Ps. 25. 18.

16 For it increaseth. ^mThou huntest me as a fierce lion:

^m Isai. 38.

And again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.

ⁿ Lam. 3. 10.

17 Thou renewest ²thy witnesses against me,

And increasest thine indignation upon me;

Changes and war *are* against me.

ⁿ ch. 3. 11.

18 ⁿWherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb?

Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

19 I should have been as though I had not been;

I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

^o See ch. 7.

20 ^oAre not my days few? ^pcease then,

6, 16.

And ^qlet me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

& 8. 9.

21 Before I go *whence* I shall not return,

Ps. 39. 5.

^rEven to the land of darkness ^aand the shadow of death;

^r Ps. 39. 13.

22 A land of darkness, as darkness *itself*;

^q ch. 7. 16.

And of the shadow of death, without any order,

19.

And *where* the light *is* as darkness.

^r Ps. 88. 12.

^r Ps. 23. 4.

CHAP. 11. THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Should not the multitude of words be answered?

And should ³a man full of talk be justified?

¹ Heb. *hedged*.

² That is, *thy plagues*, Ruth 1. 21.

³ Heb. *a man of lips*.

11. *fenced me*] Rather, *woven me*; just as we use the word "texture" or "muscular tissue."

12. *favour*] Loving and providential care. Job is speaking of his former state of temporal happiness, which he attributes wholly to God's favour.

13. *hid in thine heart*] As though all the favour were a mere semblance.

^{is}] Rather, "was." Job is speaking of the past; even when life and happiness were given, the purpose of taking both away was with God.

14. Or, *If I sinned, then Thou didst watch me, and wouldst not cleanse me from mine iniquity*. The words represent a struggle between the consciousness of sin, which Job never disguises, and the feeling that the sin, not being wilful, was not sufficient to account for his sufferings.

15. *therefore see thou mine affliction*] An ejaculatory prayer in accordance with other intimations of inner life. It may, however, be rendered, "full of confusion, and seeing my misery;" like Him of Whom Job was a type, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

16. *For it increaseth*] Rather, *And should my head* (from v. 15) *lift itself up, Thou wouldst hunt me like a lion watching the*

least movements of its prey, and prepared to rush upon it when it should stir. Or, "Yet as a lion, which springs up, Thou huntest me." The next clause is in the same tone, "and again, Thou wouldst deal marvellously with me," i.e. inflict marvellous and inexplicable plagues.

17. Or, *Thou wouldst call up new witnesses against me*; that is calamities which would be regarded as attesting guilt.

changes and war] i.e. *host upon host*. God is to Job first an inexorable judge, then a bitter enemy taking advantage of every opportunity, and now the King of terrors, sending all His forces against him.

21, 22. The utter blankness of ^a death without sensation, followed by no awakening, was first to be realized, in order that the mind might, in its recoil, grasp the hope of immortality. Contrast 1 Pet. i. 3.

XI. First discourse of Zophar the Naamathite. He pursues the same line of argument with the previous speakers, but with less dignity and earnestness than Eliphaz, less vigour and ingenuity than Bildad. The assertion that were the truth made known Job's punishment would prove to be even less than his crime, is the only new point in his discourse.

3 Should thy ¹lies make men hold their peace?

And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

4 For ^athou hast said, My doctrine *is* pure,
And I am clean in thine eyes.

^a ch. 6. 10.
& 10. 7.

5 But oh, that God would speak,—and open his lips against thee;

6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom,
That *they* are double to that which is!

Know therefore that ^bGod exacteth of thee *less* than thine iniquity ^b Ezra 9. 13.
deserveth.

7 'Canst thou by searching find out God?

Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

^c Eccles. 3.
11.
Rom. 11. 33.

8 *It is* ²as high as heaven; what canst thou do?
Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

9 The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth,
And broader than the sea.

^d ch. 9. 12.
& 12. 14.
Rev. 3. 7.

10 ^aIf he ³cut off, and shut up, or gather together,
Then ^awho can hinder him?

^e Ps. 10. 11,
14.

11 For ^ehe knoweth vain men:

He seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider *it*?

& 35. 22.
& 94. 11.
^f Ps. 73. 22.
& 92. 6.

12 For ⁵vain man would be wise,

Though man be born *like* a wild ass's colt.

Eccles. 3. 18.
Rom. 1. 22.
^g ch. 5. 8.
& 22. 21.

13 ^oIf thou ^hprepare thine heart,

And ^hstretch out thine hands toward him;

^h 1 Sam. 7. 3.
Ps. 78. 8.
ⁱ Ps. 88. 9.
& 143. 6.

14 If iniquity *be* in thine hand, put it far away,
And ^klet not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

^j Ps. 101. 3.
^k See Gen. 4.
5, 6.

15 ^lFor^{then} shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;

Yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:

ch. 22. 26.
Ps. 119. 6.
1 John 3. 21.

¹ Or, devices.

² Or, make a change.

away? ch. 9. 12.

² Heb. the heights of heaven.

⁴ Heb. who can turn him

⁵ Heb. empty.

3. *lies*] Or **boastings**. Cp. Isai. xvi. 6; Jer. xlviii. 30. The allusion is to such expressions as ix. 21, 35; x. 7.

mockest] Alluding to Job's contemptuous disregard of his friend's argument.

4. *doctrine*] The word means a point which a man takes up and adopts as a principle. It is frequent in Proverbs (cp. iv. 2). See also Deut. xxxii. 2; Isai. xxix. 24.

6. *double to that which is*] Or, **double in substance**; the meaning appears to be; they far excel not only Job's words, but have an absolute and essential excellence compared with which all human wisdom is as nothing. It is the same word as in v. 12 (see note) and vi. 13 ("wisdom").

Know therefore &c.] Lit. "and know that God forgets for thee (remits to thee) part of thy guilt," i.e. so far from exacting more than Job owes, or inflicting more than he deserves, God actually passes over a large part of his transgressions. Cp. marg. ref.

7. Or, **Canst thou attain to God's insight** (i.e. be like Him, able to search into all secret things); or **attain to the perfection of the Almighty** (i.e. so as to comprehend Him and His ways). The Hebrew has the same word for "search," and "find."

8. That is, "the wisdom of God is as the heights of heaven, how canst thou reach it?"

deeper than Sheol, how canst thou comprehend it?"

10. *If he cut off &c.*] Or, **If He pass on, and imprison, and call to judgment, who shall prevent Him?** Each clause has a direct reference to Job's complaints (ix. 11-16). The avenger of guilt passes, or rushes, on the criminal, arrests him and keeps him in custody, until the court is summoned to judge him.

11. *will he not then consider it?*] Or, "and He doth not consider it," i.e. God needs no lengthened observation. He seeth at once into the ground of the heart. Others prefer, "and man doth not perceive it."

12. Or, **And a vain man is made wise** (lit. hearted), **and the colt of a wild ass is born a man**. A difficult verse; the A. V. gives a good sense, but it seems more probable, that Zophar is describing the effect of the Divine visitation, and asserts that by it a vain man acquires a new heart and learns wisdom; and that a character wild, stubborn, and untameable (like the wild ass) is born again, so to speak, and humanized. The LXX. read, "and as a wild ass is man born of a woman."

15. *steadfast*] Lit. "molten," i.e. like a molten statue, firm and solid, after passing through the furnace of affliction.

- ^m Isai. 65. 16. 16 Because thou shalt ^mforget *thy* misery,
And remember it as waters that pass away :
- ^a Ps. 37. 6. 17 And *thine* age ^{1a}shall be clearer than the noonday ;
& 112. 4. Thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.
- Isai. 58. 8, 10. 18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope ;
Yea, thou shalt dig *about thee*, and ^othou shalt take *thy* rest in safety.
- ^c Lev. 26. 5, 6. 19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make *thee* afraid ;
Ps. 3. 5. Yea, many shall ²make suit unto thee.
& 4. 8. Prov. 3. 24. But ^pthe eyes of the wicked shall fail,
- ^p Lev. 26. 16. 20 And ³they shall not escape,
Deut. 28. 65. And ^qtheir hope *shall be as* ⁴the giving up of the *ghost*.
- ^q ch. 8. 14. & 18. 14. Prov. 11. 7. **CHAP. 12.** AND Job answered and said,
2 No doubt but ye *are* the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
- ^a ch. 13. 2. 3 But ^aI have ⁵understanding as well as you ;
⁶I *am* not inferior to you :
Yea, ⁷who knoweth not such things as these ?
- ^b ch. 16. 10. & 17. 2. 6. & 21. 3. & 30. 1. 4 ^bI *am* as one mocked of his neighbour,
Who ^ccalleth upon God, and he answereth him :
The just upright *man is* laughed to scorn.
- ^c Ps. 91. 15. 5 ^dHe that is ready to slip with *his* feet
^d Prov. 14. 2. *Is as* a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.
- ^e ch. 21. 7. 6 ^eThe tabernacles of robbers prosper,
Ps. 37. 1, 35. And they that provoke God are secure ;
& 73. 11, 12. & 92. 7. Into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.
- Jer. 12. 1. 7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee ;
Mal. 3. 15. And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee :
- 8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee :

¹ Heb. *shall arise above the noonday.*

² Heb. *intreat thy face*, Ps. 45. 12.

³ Heb. *flight shall perish from them.*

⁴ Or, *a puff of breath.*

⁵ Heb. *an heart.*

⁶ Heb. *I fall not lower than you.*

⁷ Heb. *with whom are not such as these ?*

17. *thou shalt shine forth* &c.] Rather, "the darkness shall be as the morning light," meaning that any troubles or afflictions of his latter years shall yet be full of mercy and comforts. There is probably a contrast intended to x. 22 ; as the light of the land of death is darkness, so the darkness of the just is light.

18. *dig*] Or, "search," "look around," "seek" (cp. xxxix. 29). This gives a more intelligible sense, *thou shalt look around and rest securely*, finding no cause for alarm.

20. *fail*] Through looking out in every direction with vain expectations of help. *the giving up of the ghost*] Lit. a breathing out of the soul, or expiring ; an allusion to Job's repeated longing for death (marg. refl.).

XII.-XIV. Job sums up the result of the first day's colloquy. See Intro. p. 3.

2. *the people*] The true representatives of mankind, the only people deserving the name :—said ironically.

3. *understanding*] Rather, *a heart* (as in the margin), with reference to Zophar's words, xi. 12 note.

I am not inferior to you] See the marginal rendering. The exact meaning of the phrase is, "I do not fall, or am not overthrown by you," as a wrestler by a stronger antagonist. Cp. xiii. 2.

4, 5. *Render :*

A scorn to my neighbour must I be ?

A man who calleth on God, and He heareth him !

A scorn, I, the just, the upright !

Contempt for woe is the feeling of one at ease ;

It awaits them whose feet stum'le.

It awaits, *i.e.* the man who revels in his own security is ever ready to feel contempt for one who slips, *i.e.* falls like Job into misfortune.

6. *into whose hand God bringeth*] *i.e.* who has no god but his own hand or weapon. Cp. Habak. i. 11.

7. *But ask now*] Job begins his own grand statement of the absolute power and majesty of God with the assertion that all His creatures bear witness to a truth, which his friends would seem to flatter themselves was their exclusive possession.

And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

9 Who knoweth not in all these

That the hand of the LORD hath wrought this ?

10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind.

11 Doth not the ear try words ?—and the mouth taste his meat ?

12 With the ancient is wisdom ;
And in length of days understanding.

13 With him is wisdom and strength,
He hath counsel and understanding.

14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again :
He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up :
Also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

16 With him is strength and wisdom :
The deceived and the deceiver are his.

17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,
And maketh the judges fools.

18 He looseth the bond of kings,
And girdeth their loins with a girdle.

19 He leadeth princes away spoiled,—and overthroweth the mighty.

20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty,
And taketh away the understanding of the aged.

21 He poureth contempt upon princes,
And weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness,
And bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

¹ Or, *life*.

² Heb. *all flesh of man*.

³ Heb. *palate*, ch. 6. 30.

⁴ That is, *With God*.

⁵ Heb. *upon*.

⁶ Heb. *the lip of the faithful*.

⁷ Or, *looseth the girdle of the strong*.

¹ Num. 16. 22.
Dan. 5. 23.
Acts 17. 28.
² ch. 34. 3.
³ ch. 32. 7.

⁴ ch. 9. 4.
& 36. 5.

⁵ ch. 11. 10.
⁶ Isai. 22. 22.
Rev. 3. 7.
⁷ 1 Kin. 8. 35.
& 17. 1.
⁸ Gen. 7. 11.
⁹ ver. 13.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. 15.
31.
& 17. 14, 23.
Isai. 19. 12.
& 29. 14.
¹¹ 1 Cor. 1. 10.
Isai. 3. 1, 2, 3.
¹² Ps. 107. 40.
Dan. 2. 21.
¹³ Dan. 2. 22.
Matt. 10. 26.
1 Cor. 4. 5.

9. in all these] Or, by all these, i.e. by reflecting on all these things. The creatures are a book, so to speak, in which the Creator has written the lesson which a wise heart may understand.

"The LORD:" it is remarkable that the name "Jehovah" occurs here, and here only, in the discourses of Job and of his neighbours. It is as though reflection on the greatness of God forced from him the word which expresses the very essence of the Deity. The Moabite stone, discovered in 1870, proves that the name Jehovah was known to aliens from Israel at the time when most modern critics hold that the Book of Job was written. The name was probably known, though seldom used, at a much earlier age.

11-13. The connexion of thought is this: Man acquires knowledge by the senses, the hearing ear, the palate that tastes (an ordinary biblical word for discernment, see vi. 30), and he attains to wisdom by long experience, only in old age; whereas wisdom, and power in every form, in their absolute perfection, belong to God essentially, are with Him inherently and inseparably, not as a result of experience and reflection, but as His own from eternity.

14, 15. From the absolute wisdom and
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power of God, it follows that what men consider physical evil must proceed from Him.

16. Not only physical but moral evil must take place by His permission or will; whether men deceive or are deceived they are in God's hands. Job can now see only the dark side; in seasons of calm and devout reflection he will admit that all evils are made to subserve the purposes of God. That they "work together for good to them that love God," is a truth realised fully by those only who have learned it from Christ.

17. *spoiled* | Or "captive." The meaning seems to be that God overthrows a nation; and by the ruin, which falls on the leaders and judges, convicts them of folly.

18. *girdle* | In the sense of a fetter. The general meaning of the verse is, "God sets kings free, or brings them into captivity."

19. *princes* | The original has *priests*. It is not to be inferred that priests formed a caste in Job's time, but the chieftain of each tribe and the head of a great family was, like Melchizedek, at once prince and priest. The heads of ancient families are here denoted.

20. *trusty* | i.e. "those who are trusted;" or, perhaps, "confident," because they have the gift of eloquence.

21. The marginal rendering is more literal

- † Ps. 107. 38. 23 'He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them :
Isai. 9. 3. He enlargeth the nations, and ¹straiteneth them *again*.
& 26. 15. 24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth,
" Ps. 107. 4, And "causeth them to wander in a wilderness *where there is no*
40. way.
" Deut. 28. 29. 25 "They grope in the dark without light,
eh. 5. 14. And he maketh them to ²v stagger like a drunken man.
" Ps. 107, 27. **CHAP. 13.** LO, mine eye hath seen all *this*,
Mine ear hath heard and understood it.
a ch. 12. 3. 2 ^aWhat ye know, *the same* do I know also :
I am not inferior unto you.
b ch. 23. 3. 3 ^bSurely I would speak to the Almighty,
& 31. 35. And I desire to reason with God.
c ch. 6. 21. 4 But ye are forgers of lies,—ye are all physicians of no value.
& 16. 2. 5 O that ye would altogether hold your peace!
d Prov. 17. And "it should be your wisdom.
28. 6 Hear now my reasoning,
And hearken to the pleadings of my lips.
e ch. 17. 5. 7 ^eWill ye speak wickedly for God ?
& 32. 21. And talk deceitfully for him ?
& 36. 4. 8 Will ye accept his person ?—will ye contend for God ?
9 Is it good that he should search you out ?
Or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him ?
10 He will surely reprove you,—if ye do secretly accept persons.
11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid ?
And his dread fall upon you ?
12 Your remembrances *are* like unto ashes,
Your bodies to bodies of clay.
13 ³Hold your peace, let me alone,
That I may speak, and let come on me what *will*.
f ch. 18. 4. 14 Wherefore ^fdo I take my flesh in my teeth,
" 1 Sam. 28. And ^gput my life in mine hand ?
21. 15 ^hThough he slay me, yet will I trust in him :
Ps. 119. 109. ¹ Heb. *leadeth in*. ² Heb. *wander*. ³ Heb. *Be silent from me*.
h Ps. 23. 4. Prov. 14. 32.

24. *wilderness*] A desolate waste ; the word in the original is rendered "nothing" in vi. 18, and "without form" in Gen. i. 2.

XIII. There is no pause between this and the preceding chapter. Cp. v. 2 with marg ref.

4. Job's opponents had "forged lies" to vindicate God, and had failed in their duty to heal their friend's wounds.

5. *wisdom*] True wisdom teaches in the first place the limits of our knowledge, and the duty of silence when we are really ignorant.

8. *accept his person* &c.] i.e. act as special pleaders, a common expression in Scripture for undue regard to rank and power. Job accuses his friends of defending a cause simply because they fear God's power.

12. *remembrances*] i.e. the wise saws valued as memorials of the wisdom of past ages (see viii. 8).

Your bodies &c.] Or, *your defences* (are like) to *defences of clay*; i.e. the arguments

by which you attempt to defend your position are like earth-works hastily raised, and easily overthrown.

14, 15. Job asks why he should cling to mere life, his torn and mutilated flesh, as with the desperate tenacity of a wild beast: he resolves to risk his life, to expose himself to any danger in pleading with God.

15. *Though* &c.] Or, *Lo, He may slay me, yet will I wait for Him*; i.e. abide hopefully the issue of His judgment.

The rendering of this verset depends on the reading and meaning of the word translated "in (or, to) him," and on the right construction of the word translated "trust" or "wait." So far as the first point is concerned, there may be a greater weight of authority in favour of the *reading* the word not "in him" but "not;" but there is a decided preponderance in favour of the *meaning* "to him;" which is confirmed by the construction of the word rendered "writ," adopted by the A. V.

¹But I will ¹maintain mine own ways before him.

¹ ch. 27. 5.

16 He also *shall* be my salvation :

For an hypocrite shall not come before him.

17 Hear diligently my speech,—and my declaration with your ears.

18 Behold how, I have ordered *my* cause ;

I know that I shall be justified.

19 ²Who is he *that* will plead with me ?

² ch. 33. 6.

For now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

Isai. 50. 8.

20 ¹Only do not two *things* unto me :

¹ ch. 9. 34.

Then will I not hide myself from thee.

& 33. 7.

21 ²Withdraw *thine* hand far from me :

² Ps. 39. 10.

And let not thy dread make me afraid. ³

22 Then call thou, and I will answer :

Or let me speak, and answer thou me.

23 How many *are* mine iniquities and sins ?

² Deut. 32. 20.

Make me to know my transgression and my sin.

Ps. 13. 1.

24 ²Wherefore hidest thou thy face,

& 44. 24.

And ¹holdest me for *thine* enemy ?

& 58. 14.

25 ²Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro ?

Isai. 8. 17.

And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble ?

² Deut. 32. 12.

26 For thou writest bitter things against me,

Ruth 1. 21.

And ²makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

ch. 16. 9.

27 ¹Thou² putttest my feet also in the stocks,

& 19. 11.

And ²lookest narrowly unto all my paths ;

& 33. 10.

Thou settest a print upon the ³heels of my feet.

Lam. 2. 5.

28 And ²he, as a rotten thing, consumeth,

² Isai. 42. 3.

As a garment that is moth eaten.

q ch. 20. 11.

CHAP. 14. MAN *that is* born of a woman *is* ⁴of few days,
And ²full of trouble.

Ps. 25. 7.

2 ¹He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down :

² ch. 33. 11.

He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

² ch. 5. 7.

¹ Heb. *prove*, or, *argue*.

² Heb. *observest*.

³ Heb. *roots*.

⁴ Heb. *short of days*.

Eccles. 2. 23.

² ch. 8. 9.

Ps. 90. 5, 6, 9.

& 102. 11.

& 103. 15.

& 144. 4.

Isai. 40. 6.

Jam. 1. 10,

11,

& 4. 14.

1 Pet. 1. 21.

18. *justified*] Or, **that I shall be proved righteous.** Job's confidence is in his consciousness of integrity.

19. *For now &c.*] The meaning is, if he be mistaken, and God should really impute guilt to him, he has no alternative but to lie down and die in silence. There is a strong undercurrent of hope in this.

25. *break*] The original word implies great violence, contrasted with the utter helplessness of the object against which it is directed. The contrast is continued in the second part of this verse.

26. *thou writest*] This refers to judicial proceeding, in which the accusation was produced in writing (see xxxi. 35, note; cp. Isa. x. 1.) This was customary in Egypt long before the time of Job, and probably in all countries where writing was known, as was certainly the case with the Hittites in the time of Rameses II.

the iniquities of my youth] Job's consciousness of integrity does not exclude a true estimate of his own character : yet there is a feeling that it is inconsistent with God's goodness to visit them so bitterly.

27. *in the stocks*] As a criminal already

condemned, who, when released for a season, is still watched with unceasing vigilance, and not permitted to go one step beyond the narrow bounds prescribed to him. The stocks is a punishment still used among the Bedouins in the case of condemned criminals.

Thou settest a print &c.] i. e. Thou drawest a line beyond which I must not move one step. This is no exaggerated description of the leprosy-smitten sufferer, lying on his heap of ashes, who wastes away like rottenness (v. 28).

XIV. 1-12. The tone of plaintive expostulation, when Job pleads directly with his Maker, begins with xiii. 20, and is still more strongly marked in these verses, which lead up to a gleam of hope.

1. *born of a woman*] The Hebrews attributed the weakness and moral infirmity of man to his birth of woman, conceived by her in sin (Ps. li. 5), a child of her sorrow and pain (Gen. iii. 16), and sharing her uncleanness, which, under the Law, needed a special expiation ; and that view must have been prevalent among all who retained a knowledge of the primeval history of our race.

- * Ps. 144. 3. 3 And 'dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,
 d Ps. 143. 2. And 'bringest me into judgment with thee ?
 * Gen. 5. 3. 4 'Who 'can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean ? not one.
 Ps. 51. 5. 5 'Seeing his days *are* determined,
 John 3. 6. The number of his months *are* with thee,
 Rom. 5. 12. Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass ;
 Eph. 2. 3. 6 'Turn from him, that he may 'rest,
 f ch. 7. 1. Till he shall accomplish, ^aas an hireling, his day.
 g ch. 7. 18, 19. 7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, 'that it will sprout again,
 & 10. 20. And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
 h ch. 7. 1. 8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
 i ver. 14. And the stock thereof die in the ground ;
 9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
 And bring forth boughs like a plant.
 * Ps. 102. 26. 10 But man dieth, and 'wasteth away :
 Isai. 51. 6. Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he ?
 & 65. 17. 11 As the waters fail from the sea,
 & 66. 22. And the flood decayeth and drieth up :
 Acts 3. 21. 12 So man lieth down, and riseth not :
 Rom. 8. 20. 'Till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not awake,
 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10, 11. Nor be raised out of their sleep.
 Rev. 20. 11. 13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave,
 & 21. 1. That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
 i ch. 13. 15. That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me !
 m ver. 7. 14 If a man die, shall he live *again* ?
 All the days of my appointed time 'will I wait, ^mtill my change come.
 1 Heb. *Who will give.* 2 Heb. *cease.* 3 Heb. *is weakened, or, cut off.*

4. *out of an unclean*] The fact of original sin is thus distinctly recognized.

6. *Turn from him*] Or, "look away from him," "turn Thy look from him." The look of God gives life; when that is withdrawn, comes death. Cp. Ps. xxxix. 13.

accomplish] Or, *enjoy*, the word expresses the feeling of satisfaction with which the worn-out labourer comes to the end of his day's work.

7. *tender branch*] Or, *sucker*. The tree, though cut down, continues its life (a) by sprouts springing out of the trunk, and (b) by suckers growing out of the root.

12. *Till the heavens be no more*] Cp. this expression, which in the mind of Job was apparently equivalent to a denial of the possibility of restoration to life, with the declarations of the New Testament (marg. ref.), which make the resurrection simultaneous with the breaking up of the visible universe. In this we may see a preparation of Job's spirit for a hope, which, though vague and dim, anticipated the revelation of God's purposes in Christ.

13-15. On the interpretation of this passage depends to a great extent a right insight into the scope and object of the Book. Job expresses a desire that the grave may not be his everlasting home; that he may remain there till the wrath be past; that God may

appoint a set time, and remember him: he is content to wait for that time, if he may then be called to plead his cause; and he finds a real ground for such a hope in God's love of the creation, His "desire to the work of His own hands" (see notes).

13. *hide me*] Cp. Ps. xxvii. 5. The word implies care as of a treasure.

grave] Sheol, the region of the shadow of death (x. 21, 22). That would be a real place of rest and refuge which he would enter gladly if there were a hope of restoration (x. 18). Among other names for the realm of the departed, the Egyptians called it "the covering of the weary," the place where the weary are kept in peace.

14. *shall he live again* ?] The question implies, not a denial of the possibility of such a restoration, but a deep sense of its hopelessness.

All the days &c.] i.e. "were such a hope vouchsafed I would pass all the days of my service (vii. 1) in patient waiting until my change came." The days of service in this case include the intermediate period in Sheol, when he would wait, like a soldier on guard, to be relieved; and the change is not from life to death, but from that state to new life. The word for "change" is the same as "sprout again" in v. 7.

- 15 ^aThou shalt call, and I will answer thee:
Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. ^a ch. 19. 22.
- 16 ^oFor now thou numberest my steps:
Dost thou not watch over my sin? ^o ch. 10. 6,
14. & 13. 27.
& 31. 4.
& 34. 21.
Ps. 56. 8.
& 139. 1, 2, 3.
Prov. 5. 21.
Jer. 32. 19.
^p Deut. 32.
34.
- 17 ^pMy transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And thou sewest up mine iniquity. Hos. 13. 12.
- 18 And surely the mountain falling ¹ cometh to nought,
And the rock is removed out of his place.
- 19 The waters wear the stones:
Thou ² washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth;
And thou destroyest the hope of man.
- 20 Thou prevalest for ever against him, and he passeth:
Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.
- 21 His sons come to honour, and ^q he knoweth it not;
And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. ^q Eccles. 9. 5.
Isai. 63. 16.
- 22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain,
And his soul within him shall mourn.

CHAP. 15. THEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,

- 2 Should a wise man utter ³ vain knowledge,
And fill his belly with the east wind?
3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk?
Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?
4 Yea, ⁴ thou castest off fear,—and restrainest ⁵ prayer before God.
5 For thy mouth ⁶ uttereth thine iniquity,

¹ Heb. *fadeth*.

² Heb. *overflowest*.

³ Heb. *knowledge of wind*.

⁴ Heb. *thou makest void*.

⁵ Or, *speech*.

⁶ Heb. *teacheth*.

15. *Thou wilt have a desire*] The hope of a resurrection is thus, for the first time, made to rest upon the love of God; the desire of the creature may suggest the possibility or reasonableness of such a hope, the desire of God alone can seal it. Job knew how his heart yearned to meet God, he believes that in God's heart there must be a corresponding yearning to see once more the creation of His power and love. The words prepare us for the central point of the whole Book (xix. 23-27).

16-22. The hope which has been thus suggested, is contrasted with the utter emptiness and desolation of Job's actual condition.

16. The head and source of all Job's misery is the feeling that God for some unknown reason does not pardon. Some alter the text and render, "Wilt Thou not pass over (and forgive) my sin?"

17. The meaning seems to be that God treasures up all Job's misdoings, keeps them carefully in order to repay them fully; the "iniquity," a stronger word than "transgression," is, as it were, sewed up, carefully kept in the bag.

18. Job alludes to such phenomena as the mountain undermined by subterranean fire, falling in and crumbling away; or the rock uprooted by earthquakes. These are emblems of apparent stability; in reality, they are emblems of unsound foundation, sudden overthrow, and final dissolution.

19. *thou washest &c.*] Or, *its overflowings* (i.e. of the flood) *wash away the dust of the earth*: leaving a barren waste.

20. *changest*] i.e. in the death struggle and in the rapid process of decay.

21. The first part of this verse refers to the hope that Job's posterity may still be great and prosperous (v. 25). The meaning of vv. 21, 22 taken together appears to be that the future condition of a man's children had no bearing on his own actual wretchedness.

XV.-XXI. See Introd. p. 3. This speech of Eliphaz (ch. xv.) differs much in tone from his first address, it is harsh and sarcastic, and assumes Job's guilt as proven by his own lips. He does not indeed accuse Job of *renouncing* God, but of rebelling against Him, and denounces his attempts to vindicate himself, and hold fast his integrity, as vain, impious, and hypocritical.

2. *vain knowledge*] Lit. as in the margin; i.e. empty (knowledge), noisy, and turbulent; the words of Job are like wind, his whole inner man is inflated, torn and in a state of turmoil as though possessed by storm winds from the burning desert. See also vi. 26.

4. *prayer*] Rather, "devout meditation." Job is accused of using arguments which are irreconcilable with tranquil and devout meditation, the spirit of prayer in the Presence of God (cp. Ps. cxix. 97).

5. Some render the first clause, *thine iniquity teacheth the mouth*, i.e. suggests the arguments which it utters.

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- ^a Luke 19. 22. 6 "Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I:
Yea, thine own lips testify against thee.
- ^b Ps. 90. 2. 7 *Art thou the first man that was born?*
^c Prov. 8. 25. *Or wast thou made before the hills?*
^d Rom. 11. 34. 8 "Hast thou heard the secret of God?
1 Cor. 2. 11. And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?
^e ch. 13. 2. 9 "What knowest thou, that we know not?
What understandest thou, which is not in us?
- ^f ch. 32. 6, 7. 10 "With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men,
Much elder than thy father.
- 11 *Are the consolations of God small with thee?*
Is there any secret thing with thee?
- 12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away?
And what do thy eyes wink at,
- 13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God,
And lettest *such* words go out of thy mouth?
- ^g 1 Kin. 8. 46. 14 "What *is* man, that he should be clean?
2 Chr. 6. 36. And *he which* is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
ch. 14. 4. 15 "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints;
Ps. 14. 3. Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.
Prov. 20. 9. 16 "How much more abominable and filthy *is* man,
Eccles. 7. 20. "Which drinketh iniquity like water?
1 John 1. 8, 10. 17 I will shew thee, hear me;
^h ch. 4. 18. And that *which* I have seen I will declare;
& 25. 5. 18 Which wise men have told
ⁱ ch. 4. 19. "From their fathers, and have not hid *it*:
Ps. 14. 3. 19 Unto whom alone the earth was given,
& 53. 3. And "no stranger passed among them.
^j Prov. 19. 28. 20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all *his* days,
^k ch. 8. 8. "And the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.
- ^l Joel 3. 17. 21 "A dreadful sound *is* in his ears:
"In prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.
- ^m Ps. 90. 12.
- ⁿ 1 Thess. 5. 3.

¹ Heb. *A sound of fears.*

7. *the first man*] In allusion to the belief that Adam the first man was endowed with perfect wisdom by God.

8. *Hast thou heard &c.*] Or, *wast thou present as a hearer in the counsel of God?* The reference is to such passages as Gen. i. 26; iii. 22.

10. *With us*] Either Job's contemporaries, or, more probably, the ancient sages quoted by Bildad, and afterwards in this discourse by Eliphaz himself (v. 18).

11. *the consolations of God*] *i.e.* the assurances of deliverance, restoration, and a happy and secure old age, on the condition of Job's confessing his guilt and putting it away. These would have been "consolations" had Job accepted the premisses of Eliphaz.

Is there any secret thing with thee? Rather, *and the word spoken gently to thee?* *i.e.* arguments which were addressed to Job in a tender and gentle spirit, such as Eliphaz considers that his own should be regarded.

12. *wink at*] Or, *roll*. An angry indignant movement of the eye is here indicated.

16. Or, *How much more shall one be condemned who is abominable and filthy, a man who drinks iniquity like water?* *i.e.* Job himself (cp. xxxiv. 7).

19. The verse describes a state of things long passed away, when the patriarchs lived in quiet possession of their own land, and could preserve unbroken the traditions of the primeval world and their own purity of life. The saying is singularly appropriate in the mouth of Eliphaz the Temanite, whose country offered little temptation to invaders, and was inhabited by a race famed throughout the East for wisdom, shown especially in retention of ancient traditions (cp. ii. 11 note).

20. The latter clause means either, *and a limited number of years is reserved for the oppressor*; or "even number of years" &c., *i.e.* as long as he lives.

21. The following verses are allusions to Job's own complaints. Eliphaz takes each and all the symptoms of guilt, or proofs of iniquity.

- 22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness,
And he is waited for of the sword.
- 23 He wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where is it ?
He knoweth that ¹the day of darkness is ready at his hand. ^o Ps. 59. 15.
& 100. 10.
^p ch. 18. 12.
- 24 Trouble^q and anguish shall make him afraid ;
They shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.
- 25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God.
And strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.
- 26 He runneth upon him, *even on his neck*,
Upon the thick bosses of his bucklers :
- 27 ^qBecause he covereth his face with his fatness,
And maketh collops of fat on *his flanks*.^q Ps. 17. 10.
- 28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities,
And in houses which no man inhabiteth,
Which are ready to become heaps.
- 29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue,
Neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.
- 30 He shall not depart out of darkness ;
The flame shall dry up his branches,
And ^rby the breath of his mouth shall he go away.^r ch. 4. 9.
- 31 Let not him that is deceived ^strust in vanity :
For vanity shall be his recompence.^s Isai. 59. 4.
- 32 It shall be ^taccomplished ^ubefore his time,
And his branch shall not be green.^t ch. 22. 16.
Ps. 55. 23.
- 33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,
And shall cast off his flower as the olive.
- 34 For the congregation of hypocrites *shall be desolate*,
And fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.
- 35 ^uThey conceive mischief, and bring forth ^vvanity,
And their belly prepareth deceit.^u Ps. 7. 14.
Isai. 59. 4.
Hos. 10. 13.

CHAP. 16. THEN Job answered and said,

¹ Or, cut off.

² Or, iniquity.

22. *out of darkness*] *i.e.* from his hiding place, to which he betook himself when fleeing from the destroyer ; he knows that the sword of the foe awaits him.

23. *Where is it ?*] The word in the original may, with different vowel points, mean "vulture." Hence the forcible rendering "He wanders about to be the food of vultures."

24. *the battle*] Probably the "onslaught," the fierce struggle in the field of battle.

26. *even on his neck, upon &c.*] Rather, "with ^hhis neck," resolutely, stubbornly, like a wild bull. So also with the next clause, not "^upon" but "with the thick bosses, &c."

27, 28. The connexion of thought is this. He shall not have an abiding prosperity, because he has lived in luxury, and dwelt in houses which he has acquired by the ruin of the lawful possessors, and which are therefore destined to destruction.

29. Some render the last clause "their substance does not press the earth," *i.e.* is not like a well laden wagon in harvest time : others, "neither shall he cast their shadow on the earth," *i.e.* will not live in the light of day ; connecting it with the next clause.

31. Or, let him not trust in vanity : he is deceived.

32. *It shall be accomplished*] *i.e.* by a premature destruction.

33. The grape in its first stage is peculiarly tender and liable to disease ; and the flowers of the olive are shaken off by the least gust of wind.

34. *the congregation*] Apparently all a man's family, connections, and associates (see xvi. 7). Two charges are insinuated ; "hypocrisy" with reference to Job's former reputation for piety, and "bribery" with reference to his character as a judge ; both words imply secret and unsuspected guilt, discovered only by the punishment.

XVI. Job's answer occupies two chapters. In xvi. 1-5, he rejects the statements of Eliphaz as common-place, such as he might have himself used with equal ease had the positions of the speakers been reversed. In vv. 6-16, he draws out all the circumstances of his misery in order to justify the extremity of his anguish ; and after an asseveration of innocence (v. 17), he appeals to earth and heaven, and to God Himself (v. 20). In xvii. 1-10, he continues the appeal, and

- * ch. 13. 4. 2 I have heard many such things :
 1^a Miserable comforters *are* ye all.
 3 Shall ^avain words have an end ?
 Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest ?
 4 I also could speak as ye *do* :
 If your soul were in my soul's stead,
 I could heap up words against you,
 And ^bshake mine head at you. •
^b Ps. 22. 7.
 & 109. 25.
 Lam. 2. 15. 5 But I would strengthen you with my mouth,
 And the moving of my lips should assuage *your grief*.
 6 Though I speak, my grief is not asswaged :
 And *though* I forbear, ³what am I eased ?
 7 But now he hath made me weary :
 Thou hast made desolate all my company.
 8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, *which* is a witness against
me :
 And my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.
 * ch. 10. 16, 17. 9 ^cHe teareth *me* in his wrath, who hateth me :
 He gnasheth upon me with his teeth ;
^d Mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.
 * Ps. 22. 13.
 Is. 67. 4. 10 They have ^egaped upon me with their mouth ;
 They ^fhave smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully ;
 They have ^ggathered themselves together against me.
 / Lam. 3. 30.
 Mic. 6. 1. 11 God ^hhath delivered me to the ungodly,
 And turned me over into the hands of the wicked.
 John 18. 22.
 & 19. 3.
 v Ps. 35. 15.
^h ch. 1. 15, 17.

¹ Or, *troublesome*.² Heb. *words of wind*.³ Heb. *what goeth from me ?*⁴ Heb. *hath shut me up*.

grounds it on the scorn, contumely (v. 2), ignorance (v. 4), and dishonesty (v. 5) of his friends. He then (vv. 11-16) concludes with an expression of utter hopelessness so far as life is concerned; if there be hope it has no visible grounds, it has its only home in death.

2. *many such things*] Such wise saws as identify guilt with suffering. "Miserable comforters," or "comforters of trouble," i.e. men who bring nothing but trouble. The same word is used here which in xv. 35 is rendered "mischief." Job thus retorts, that the conception of mischief, or trouble, applies more directly to those whose duty it was to console the afflicted.

3. *vain words*] With ref. to the charge of Eliphaz (xv. 1).

4. *shake mine head*] i.e. to express conviction of the sufferer's great and unpardonable sinfulness (cp. marg. ref.).

6. Words and silence are alike bootless in such a case as Job's, *they bring no relief*.

7-16. Job describes all the wretchedness which subjects him to the imputation of guilt. He thus shews that he is quite as fully convinced as others can be, that he labours under divinely appointed calamities; a point of great importance, which is kept before us throughout as the peculiar trial of the patriarch: the question is, whether he will forsake God, or give up his own integrity, when convinced that he

stands alone, despised by man, an object of God's wrath, utterly hopeless and desolate.

7. *all my company*] Cp. xv. 34. That which Eliphaz represents as the proper punishment of the hypocrite has befallen Job; "all that should accompany old age, such as honour, reverence, and troops of friends," is taken away.

8. *filled me with wrinkles*] Some render, *bound me fast* hand and foot, deprived me of all power of resisting or moving (xiii. 27).

leanness] Lit. "falsehood," i.e. affliction, which is falsely taken as a sign of secret guilt. Cp. Ps. cix. 24.

9. *He teareth*] Or, *His wrath teareth, and He hateth me*: i.e. He deals with me altogether as an enemy. Job is speaking of the outward demonstrations, not of the inward movements of God's feeling towards him; had he believed the enmity to be real and absolute, there could have been no pleading (see v. 20). Cp. Hos. vi. 1; Amos i. 11.

enemy] Job chooses that word which (in the original) expresses enmity shewn by outward acts; an "afflicter," not a "hater." *sharpeneth his eyes upon me*] Looks on me with a fierce scrutinizing glance.

11. The heaviest affliction of all was that it was God's will to deliver him up to men whose want of honesty, truthfulness, and love evinced their wickedness. This passage was before the Psalmist when he de-

12 ¶ was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder :

He hath also taken *me* by my neck, and shaken me to pieces,
And 'set me up for his mark.

¹ ch. 7. 20.

13 His archers compass me round about.

He cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare;
He poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach,
He runneth upon me like a giant.

15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin,
And ^kdefiled my horn in the dust.

* ch. 30. 19.
Ps. 7. 5.

16 My face is foul with weeping,
And on my eyelids is the shadow of death:

17 Not for *any* injustice in mine hands :
Also my prayer *is* pure.

18 O earth, cover not thou my blood,
And 'let my cry have no place.

^l ch. 27. 9.
Ps. 66. 18, 19.
^m Rom. 1. 9.

19 Also now, behold, ^mmy witness *is* in heaven,
And my record *is* ¹on high.

20 My friends ²scorn me:

But mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

21 "O that one might plead for a man with God,
As a man *pleadeth* for his ³neighbour!

n ch. 31. 35.
Eccles. 6. 10.
Isai. 45. 9.
Rom. 9. 20.

22 When 'a few years are come,

Then I shall go the way *whence* I shall not return.

° Eccles. 12.
5.

CHAP. 17. MY ^bbreath is corrupt, my days are extinct,
^aThe graves are ready for me.

^a Ps. 88. 3, 4.

2 *Are there not mockers with me?*

And doth not mine eye ⁶continue in their ^bprovocation?

^b 1 Sam. 1.
6, 7.

¹ Heb. *in the high places*.

³ Or, *friend*.

⁵ Or, *spirit is spent*.

² Heb. are *my* scorers.

⁴ Heb. *years of number*.

⁶ Heb. *lodge*.

picted the sufferings of Christ (Ps. xxii. 12, 13).

12, 13. Cp. Lam. ii. 11, iii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 29.

15. *my horn*] The badge of power and dignity ; all that Job prided himself upon.

16. *foul*] Or, "inflamed;" indicative of the inward working of passion.

17. Cp. Isaiah, liii. 9. Job directly meets the two charges of injustice toward man, and hypocrisy toward God.

18. Job alludes to the old belief, that the blood of one unjustly slain remains on the earth (see *Isai. xxvi. 21*; *Ezek. xxiv. 7, 8*; *Gen. iv. 10*). Job's blood, like that of Abel, cries to God; that cry can have "no place," no rest until it is answered.

19. This verse prepares us for xix. 25. Even now, in the very midst of his desolation, when he seems to be wholly without a supporter, God Himself is Job's "witness" and "record;" One Who will deliver His testimony, One Who knows and will assert the truth.

20. Or, **My scorers are my friends**; they, who scorn me, are those who ought to befriend me.

21. O that He (that is, God Himself) would plead for a man (*i.e.* for me) with

God : Job appeals from God to God ; as He is at once Accuser and Judge, so he prays that He would be also at once Advocate and Judge (see xvii. 3 note). Each aspiration draws nearer to the unrevealed truth : no "daysman," who is not, like the Judge Himself, all-knowing and Almighty, will suffice.

as a man &c.] Or, **and for the son of man** (i.e. Job) **against his neighbour**; i.e. that God would plead Job's cause, first, before Himself as Judge, secondly, against Job's fellow-men. Job applies to himself the term *son of man*, as representing the cause of suffering humanity. In this he was a true type of the Son of Man.

22. This verse is closely connected with xvii. 1, 2. The near approach of death, marked by fetid breath, and the persecution which Job undergoes, are pleaded as grounds for a divine interposition.

XVII. 1. Omit the word "ready;" the grave is already Job's, he feels that he belongs to it, and it to him.

2. The meaning is; "Am I not altogether an object of mockery to my friends, who profess to hold out a hope of recovery, and yet accuse me of unpardonable sin? Is not their bitter provocation incessant?"

- 3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee;
 Who *is* he *that* ^cwill strike hands with me?
 4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding:
 Therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.
 5 He that speaketh flattery to *his* friends,
 Even the eyes of his children shall fail.
 6 He hath made me also ^aa byword of the people;
 And ^abeforetime I was as a tabret.
 7 ^cMine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow,
 And all ²my members *are* as a shadow.
 8 Upright *men* shall be astonished at this,
 And the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.
 9 The righteous also shall hold on his way,
 And he that hath ^fclean hands ³shall be stronger and stronger.
 10 But as for you all, ^vdo ye return, and come now:
 For I cannot find *one* wise man among you.
 11 ^aMy days are past, my purposes are broken off,
 Even ⁴the thoughts of my heart.
 12 They change the night into day:
 The light *is* ⁵short because of darkness.
 13 If I wait, the grave *is* mine house:
 I have made my bed in the darkness.
 14 I have ⁶said to corruption, Thou *art* my father:
 To the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister.
 15 And where *is* now my hope?—as for my hope, who shall see it?
 16 They shall go down ⁴to the bars of the pit,
 When *our* ^krest together *is* in the dust.
- ¹ Or, *before them*. ³ Heb. *shall add strength*. ⁵ Heb. *near*.
² Or, *my thoughts*. ⁴ Heb. *the possessions*. ⁶ Heb. *cried, or, called*.

3. The verse refers to the usual proceedings in a court of justice; each party in a suit had to deposit a pledge, or to find surety; the surety accepted the responsibility by striking hands with the person whom he represented (see marg. ref.). Job turns from his friends; they are not to be depended upon (v. 4). He ^ccalls upon God Himself to “lay down” the caution-money, to be Himself surety with Himself as Judge, to accept the position of Job’s advocate. The expression “with Thee” is striking, be my surety with Thyself (xvi. 21); no other mediation or advocacy is possible.

5. *flattery*] The word means “booty,” and the whole sentence signifies, **A man who gives up his friend to be despoiled**, instead of defending him and taking his part when he is in calamity, will undergo chastisement in his own person, and in the persons of his children.

6-9. The general sense is; “Although He has brought me to this state of shame (v. 6) and misery (v. 7), so that upright men are confounded and indignant, yet the righteous man (i.e. Job, conscious of integrity) will hold his course, and become stronger.”

6. *and aforetime I was as a tabret*] Rather, **and I am an object of spitting in the face** (see xxx. 10; cp. Num. xii. 14; Deut. xxv. 9).

9. *The righteous also*] Or, **Yet the righteous will hold fast his way**; i.e. notwithstanding all this cruel treatment and temptation, Job will “hold fast his integrity;” even as God Himself had declared of him.

10. That is, “Return to the charge, repeat your arguments; I can see no real wisdom in any of you:” a bitter but just irony (cp. xlii. 7, 8).

11. *thoughts*] Lit. **possessions**; a fine expression for all that the heart and mind has acquired and cares to retain, its best thoughts, purposes, and imaginations.

12. *They change*] i.e. my pretended comforters mock me by promising me a return of light (xi. 17).

the light &c.] Or, **light is near in place of darkness**, i.e. they say that light must be near at hand, on the supposition of my innocence or penitence, although it is clear that darkness has already set in.

13, 14. These words express one thought, there is no hope but in the grave. Yet this verse is not an expression of absolute helplessness. Job (cp. xiv. 13-15) has at the bottom of his heart a feeling which assures him that Sheol, the region of the shadow of death, is not the last word of God to man. The next verse is a further advance towards the solution of the mystery.

16. The interpretation of this verse is en-

CHAP. 18. THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

- 2 How long *will it be ere ye make an end of words?*
Mark, and afterwards we will speak.
- 3 Wherefore are we counted *as beasts,*
And reputed vile in your sight? ^a Ps. 73. 22.
- 4 ^bHe teareth ¹himself in his anger :
Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?
And shall the rock be removed out of his place ? ^b ch. 13. 14.
- 5 Yea, ^cthe light of the wicked shall be put out,
And the spark of his fire shall not shine. ^c Prov. 13. 9.
& 20. 20.
& 24. 20.
- 6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle,
^dAnd his ²candle shall be put out with him. ^d ch. 21. 17.
- 7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
And ^ehis own counsel shall cast him down. Ps. 18. 28.
^e ch. 5. 13.
- 8 For ^fhe is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walketh upon a snare. ^f ch. 22. 10.
- 9 The gin shall take *him* by the heel,
And ^gthe robber shall prevail against him. Ps. 9. 15.
& 35. 8.
^g ch. 5. 5.
- 10 The snare is ^hlaid for him in the ground,
And a trap for him in the way.
- 11 ^hTerrors shall make him afraid on every side,
And shall ⁱdrive him to his feet. ^h ch. 15. 21.
& 20. 25.
Jer. 6. 25.
& 20. 3.
& 46. 5.
& 49. 29.
ⁱ ch. 15. 23.
- 12 His strength shall be hungerbitten,
And ⁱdestruction shall be ready at his side.

¹ Heb. *his soul*.

² Or, *lamp*.

³ Heb. *hidden*.

⁴ Heb. *scatter him*.

cumbered with the greatest difficulties. Most interpreters render, "my hopes will go down to the bars of Sheol," will have there their home; but the metaphor is harsh. Others translate differently, and render interrogatively both clauses of the verse: "Will the bars of Sheol fall? Or will there be altogether rest in the grave?" Such questions are in harmony with the whole under current of thought; they are not indeed equivalent to the expression of a hope, but they are a true aspiration, and, as such, an unconscious prophecy.

XVIII. The speech of Bildad consists of vituperations, in which the words used by Job to describe his misery are taken as applicable, universally and exclusively, to the calamities which befall the wicked. Job is to Bildad henceforth simply as one that "knoweth not God" (v. 21). In the discourses of Job there is a steady onward progress; but in the speeches of his friends, the change is from better to worse. In Bildad's speech, and in the answer of Job, we find the central crisis of the discussion.

2. *end of words*] Bildad retorts Job's words against him (xvi. 3). Many commentators render "nets of words," or "hunting after words," i.e. "how long wilt thou go on artfully and deceitfully devising words for the purpose of entrapping us?"

3. *reputed vile*] Lit. "shut up," &c. silenced, looked on as unfit to speak.

4. *teareth himself*] Job had accused God of "tearing" him (xvi. 9); Bildad says that his own struggles are the main cause of his misery.

Shall the earth be forsaken] i.e. "shall the whole course of the world's government be altered to meet your wishes?" with reference to Job's longings for a perfect manifestation of God's justice.

5. *the light*] i.e. the lamp, which lights the whole tent.

the spark of his fire] i.e. the last spark of the ashes smouldering on the deserted hearth.

6. Cp. x. 22. Darkness shall be his light; the extinction of the lamp suspended over him in his tent will be a symbol and accident of his own destruction.

7. *The steps of his strength*] Or, "his mighty strides." Two points are noted, the robber, accustomed to prowl over a vast expanse, is confined to a narrow space (cp. xii. 24, 25, xiii. 27), and he is ruined by the very craftiness of his own plans. Bildad thus suggests that Job and his family may have been Bedouin robbers.

9. *the robber*] Or, the mantrap, which springs up, catches him, and fastens him down.

11. *drive*] "Startle him to his feet," i.e. when he crouches to elude search, or lies down worn out, some new terror makes him start up and flee.

- 13 It shall devour the ¹strength of his skin :
Even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.
- ^k ch. 8. 14. 14 ^kHis confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle,
^{& 11. 20.} And it shall bring him to the king of terrors.
- ^{Ps. 112. 10.} 15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because *it is* none of his :
^{Prov. 10. 28.} Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.
- ^l ch. 29. 19. 16 ^lHis roots shall be dried up beneath,
^{Isai. 5. 24.} And above shall his branch be cut off.
- ^{Amos 2. 9.} 17 ^mHis remembrance shall perish from the earth,
^{Mal. 4. 1.} And he shall have no name in the street.
- ^m Ps. 34. 16. 18 ⁿHe shall be driven from light into darkness,
^{& 109. 13.} And chased out of the world.
- ^{Prov. 2. 22.} 19 ⁿHe shall neither have son nor nephew among his people,
^{& 10. 7.} Nor any remaining in his dwellings.
- ⁿ Isai. 14. 22. 20 They that come after *him* shall be astonished at ^ohis day,
^{Jer. 22. 30.} As they that ³went before ⁴were affrighted.
- ^o Ps. 37. 13. 21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked,
 And this *is* the place of *him* that ^pknoweth not God.
- ^p Jer. 9. 3. **CHAP. 19.** THEN Job answered and said,
^{& 10. 25.} 2 How long will ye vex my soul,
 1 Thess. 4. 5. And break me in pieces with words ?
 2 Thess. 1. 8. 3 These ^aten times have ye reproached me :
 Titus 1. 16. Ye are not ashamed *that* ye ^bmake yourselves strange to ^cme.
- ^a Gen. 31. 7. 4 And be it indeed *that* I have erred,
^{Lev. 26. 26.} Mine error remaineth with myself.
- ^b Ps. 38. 16. 5 If indeed ye will ^bmagnify *yourselves* against me,
 And plead against me my reproach :
- 6 Know now that God hath overthrown me,
 And hath compassed me with his net.
- ¹ Heb. bars. ³ Or, lived with him. ⁵ Or, harden yourselves
² Heb. They shall drive him. ⁴ Heb. laid hold on horror. ^{against me.}

13. *the strength of his skin*] Lit. "the bars of his skin" (xvii. 16 note), i.e. the muscles of his body.

the first-born of death] A fine, though vague personification of the calamity which does the work of death, and acts as his emissary. Death has his family; in the hideous disease which devoured Job's strength, Bildad might see death's firstborn.

14. Or, *He shall be rooted out of his tent, his confidence*, in which he trusted as his stronghold.

it shall bring him] i.e. the firstborn of death shall bring him to death, the "king of terrors." This personification of death rests probably upon a feeling that for the wicked death is the entrance into a state of unknown horror.

15. *Brimstone...scattered*] As over the site of cities overthrown by divine wrath, and consumed by fire from heaven. There may be a reference to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xix. 24; Deut. xxix. 23; Ps. xi. 6).

19. *nephew*] *Grandchild*.
dwellings] Or, "places of his sojourning;" he had no home, but a mere temporary settlement.

20. *at his day*] i.e. the day of his judgment, as though that was in truth the only

day which belonged to him, as his own by right.

They that come after him...that went before] i.e. each generation shall hand down the terrible history to remotest time for warning. Others render, "men of all lands, of the west and of the east."

XIX. After a brief expostulation (vv. 2-4), Job declares that his calamities, which come from God, ought to excite pity (vv. 5-22). He states his conviction as one which deserves a perpetual record, that his cause being the cause of righteousness, is secure; that God is Himself his Redeemer, a Redeemer now living in Heaven, hereafter to be manifested in Earth; to be seen by Job's own eyes after the destruction of his whole bodily frame. He concludes with an emphatic warning, that they who judge harshly will be judged unsparingly (vv. 23-29).

3. *make yourselves strange*] The original word is obscure, it means either "bewilder," or more probably "maltreat" by injurious imputations.

4. *with myself*] The word means, either "in my own consciousness," or that Job had not wronged them.

6. *God hath overthrown*] Rather, "perverted me," "dealt with me unjustly." The

- 7 Behold, I cry out of ¹wrong, but I am not heard:
I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment.
- 8 ^cHe hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass,
And he hath set darkness in my paths. ^c ch. 3. 23.
Ps. 88. 8.
- 9 ^dHe hath stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown *from* my head. ^d Ps. 89. 44.
- 10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone:
And mine hope hath he removed like a tree.
- 11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me,
And ^ehe counteth me unto him as *one of* his enemies. ^e ch. 13. 24.
Lam. 2. 5.
^f ch. 30. 12.
- 12 His troops *come* together, and ^fraise up their way against me,
And encamp round about my tabernacle.
- 13 ^gHe hath put my brethren far from me,
And mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. ^g Ps. 31. 11.
& 38. 11.
& 69. 8.
& 88. 8. 18.
- 14 My kinsfolk have failed,
And my familiar friends have forgotten me.
- 15 They that dwell in mine house, and my maids,
Count me for a stranger:—I am an alien in their sight.
- 16 I called my servant, and he gave *me* no answer;
I intreated him with my mouth.
- 17 My breath is strange to my wife,
Though I intreated for the children's *sake* of ²mine own body.
- 18 Yea, ³young children despised me;
I arose, and they spake against me. ^h 2 Kin. 2. 23.
- 19 ⁱAll ⁴my inward friends abhorred me:
And they whom I loved are turned against me. ⁱ Ps. 41. 9.
& 55. 13, 14,
20.
- 20 ^kMy bone cleaveth to my skin ^eand to my flesh,
And I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. ^k ch. 30. 30.
Ps. 102. 5.
Lam. 4. 8.
- 21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends;
- ¹ Or, *violence*. ³ Or, *the wicked*. ⁴ Heb. *the men of my secret*.
² Heb. *my belly*. ⁵ Or, *as*.

word is purposely strong. The object of the divine dispensation was precisely the reverse of what Job's friends had assumed it to be; it was not intended to punish his guilt, but to test and prove his righteousness; hence it was just: interpreted as they interpreted it, it would have been a perversion of justice.

7. Rather, *Lo! I cry aloud. Violence!* The word is used as an ejaculation, as probably in Hab. i. 2.

9. Cp. xxix. 14. The mantle and the crown, symbols not merely of dignity and high rank but of righteousness, were, so to speak, stripped from him when he was treated as a criminal.

10. *removed*] Or, *torn up* as a tree by its roots.

11. What makes this so appalling but Job's own love and faith? The complaint tells of natural weakness, but proves spiritual firmness. God may appear to forsake him; he will not renounce God.

12. *His troops*] All things that work together for man's weal or woe are the executors of God's will (x. 17). The word "troop" means specially bands sent out to ravage an enemy's country.

raise up their way] i.e. make a raised way

or road, or *raise a mound*, as against a besieged city. This indicates a deliberate and persevering invasion.

15. *stranger—alien*] Both words are carefully chosen; not merely a "stranger" but a "foreigner," with no claim even to sympathy.

17. The first clause touches a source of peculiarly poignant suffering (ii. 9 note). The next clause probably means: "I am loathsome to the children of my mother's womb," lit. my womb, i.e. the womb that bare me (iii. 10).

18. *young children*] See marg.; children of wilful insolent character.

19. *inward friends*] *Men of my counsel*, to whom I confided my thoughts and applied for counsel.

20. *My bone &c.*] i.e. the bones are distinctly seen through the thin flesh and tightened akin, to which they cleave without any protection of healthy moisture.

with the skin of my teeth] Either, the only parts of the system as yet unaffected by disease were the teeth with their skin or gums; or the teeth were no longer covered by the parched lips, but protruded with the diseased gums.

21. *the hand of God &c.*] That was to

- ¹ ch. 1. 11.
² Ps. 38. 2.
³ Ps. 69. 26.
- 22 ¹For the hand of God hath touched me.
 Why do ye ^mpersecute me as God,
 And are not satisfied with my flesh?
- 23 ¹Oh that my words were now written!
 Oh that they were printed in a book!
 24 That they were graven with an iron pen
 And lead in the rock for ever!
- 25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth,
 And *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:
- 26 ²And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*,
 Yet ²in my flesh shall I see God:
- ⁴ Ps. 17. 15.
¹ Cor. 13. 12.
¹ John 3. 2.
- 27 Whom I shall see for myself,
 And mine eyes shall behold, and not ³another;
⁴Though my reins be consumed ⁵within me.
- ⁶ ver. 22.
- 28 But ye should say, ⁶Why persecute we him,
⁶Seeing the root of the matter is found in me?
- 29 Be ye afraid of the sword:
 For wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword,
⁷That ye may know *there is* a judgment.
- ⁸ Ps. 58. 10,
 11.

CHAP. 20. THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

¹ Heb. *Who will give, &c.*
² Or, *After I shall awake,*
though this body be de-
stroyed, yet out of my

flesh shall I see God.
³ Heb. *a stranger.*
⁴ Or, *my reins within me*
are consumed with earnest

desire [for that day.]
⁵ Heb. *in my bosom.*
⁶ Or, *and what root of*
matter is found in me?

Job's friends the very ground why they would not pity him. Thus in the present day the Bedouins cast out a leper, leave him to die in a small black tent, some half hour's distance from their encampment, abandoned, as "slain of God."

22. *with my flesh*] Job compares them to wild beasts. "Eater of flesh," is the Syriac expression for a calumniator, and such is probably the meaning here.

23, 24. *printed in a book*] Set down distinctly on parchment; but a parchment may perish; hence Job will have an indelible inscription, the character cut deep with steel, and filled up with lead. The antiquity of such inscriptions is no longer a matter of question.

25. *redeemer*] The Goel, the "ransomer," "deliverer," specially denoted one who took up a man's cause, and vindicated his rights either by avenging him on his foes, or by restoring him or his heirs to possessions of which he had been defrauded. By his use of the word, Job declares his certainty that there is One Who will not only be his advocate (see xvi. 21 note); but Who will be his Goel, will vindicate his righteousness and clear his cause completely.

he shall stand at the latter day] Or, "and He will rise over the dust (the grave) at the last," i.e. at the close of all things, as the final manifestation of God.

26. Lit., "And after they have thus destroyed my skin, yet out of my flesh shall I see God," i.e. "and after my skin has been thus destroyed, even then out of my flesh

(i.e. by the medium of my bodily senses, or—as some prefer—deprived of my flesh) shall I see God."

27. *and not another*] A very striking declaration of his belief that he himself, as the same true living man, would see God.

The last clause probably contains the sense given in our marginal rendering: for the "reins" in the Semitic languages are regarded as the seat of the deepest and tenderest affections, especially of longing. Job looks into his bosom, and finds the bitterness of hope deferred wearing out his heart with yearnings and longings only to be fulfilled, at some unrevealed period, by a personal manifestation of his Redeemer.

28, 29. The probable rendering is: "If ye shall say, 'how shall we persecute him?' and 'the root of the matter is found in me,' then be ye afraid of the sword for yourselves. for scorn is one of the sins of the sword, so that ye will know that there is a judgment." Some render (from v. 27): "My reins yearn to hear you say, Why do we persecute him? and to acknowledge that the root of the matter is found in me. Be on your guard against reviling: for wrath due to transgressions will come on you because you adopt unjust chiding."

XX. Zophar, like the other speakers, takes Job as the representative of guilty sufferers; each separate affliction is a witness, all his griefs tell one tale, the hatred of God and the certainty of Job's complete destruction.

- 2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer,
And for *this* ¹I make haste.
- 3 I have heard the check of my reproach,
And the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.
- 4 Knowest thou *not* this of old,—since man was placed upon earth,
^aThat the triumphing of the wicked *is* ²short,
And the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment?
- 6 ^bThough his excellency mount up to the heavens,
And his head reach unto the ³clouds;
- 7 Yet he shall perish for ever ^clike his own dung:
They which have seen him shall say, Where *is* he?
- 8 He shall fly away ^das a dream, and shall not be found:
Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.
- 9 ^eThe eye also *which* saw him shall *see him* no more;
Neither shall his place any more behold him.
- 10 ^fHis children shall seek to please the poor,
And his hands ^gshall restore their goods.
- 11 His bones are full of ^h*the sin* of his youth,
ⁱWhich shall lie down with him in the dust.
- 12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,
Though he hide it under his tongue;
- 13 *Though* he spare it, and forsake it not;
But ^jkeep it still ^kwithin his mouth:
- 14 Yet his meat in his bowels is turned,
It is the gall of asps within him.
- 15 He hath swallowed down riches,
And he shall vomit them up again:
God shall cast them out of his belly.
- 16 He shall suck the poison of asps:
The viper's tongue shall slay him.
- 17 He shall not see ^lthe rivers,
^mThe floods, the brooks of honey and butter.
- 18 That which he laboured for ⁿshall he restore,

^a Ps. 37. 35,
36.

^b Isai. 14. 13,
14.

^c Obad. 3. 4.
^d Ps. 83. 10.

^e Ps. 73. 20.
& 90. 5.

^f ch. 7. 8, 10.
& 8. 15.

^g Ps. 37. 36.
& 103. 16.

^h ver. 18.
ⁱ Ps. 25. 7.

^j ch. 21. 26.

^k Ps. 36. 9.
Jer. 17. 6.

^l ver. 10. 15.

¹ Heb. *my haste is in me.*

² Heb. *from near.*

³ Heb. *cloud.*

^a Or, *The poor shall oppress his children.*

^b Heb. *in the midst of his palate.*

^c Or, *streaming brooks.*

2. *Therefore*] i.e. because Job denies that his sufferings prove guilt, and holds fast to his integrity and belief in an absolute vindication after death.

thoughts] See iv. 13 note.

3. *the check of my reproach*] i.e. the reproof, intended to put me to shame, such as that which closes the last speech of Job.

of my understanding] Rather, out of; the meaning appears to be, that his spirit cannot bear such reproof, but draws an answer from the understanding, the storehouse in which the results of experience and reflection are kept for the use of man's spirit.

7. The simile is taken from the dung of cattle, of which the heap, on which Job sat, was formed (ii. 8 note).

10. The text, representing children compelled to seek the favour of those whom their father had impoverished, is more forcible than the margin.

11. *sin of his youth*] A cruel taunt, referring to Job's touching remonstrance (xiii. 26). The word "sin" is, however, not in

the original; and the Hebrew probably means, "his bones were full of youthful vigour."

12-15. The figures are singularly repulsive, they are recorded as indications of a fierce and intolerant spirit.

14. *is turned*] i.e. to poison. Cp. the Arab saying, "crime may be enjoyed, but not digested."

the gall of asps] Bitterness and poison are identified by Hebrew writers. The notion that the viper's poison resided in the gall was general among the ancients.

17. Images of paradisiacal happiness reserved, as Zophar believes, in the shape of temporal prosperity for the righteous upon earth.

18. Render:

"Yielding up what he labours for, he shall not swallow it,
According to the value of his merchandize shall he not rejoice."

In other words, he will not enjoy even what

And shall not swallow it down :

¹According to *his* substance *shall* the restitution be,
And he shall not rejoice *therein*.

19 Because he hath ²oppressed *and* hath forsaken the poor ;
Because he hath violently taken away an house which *he* builded
not ;

¹ Eccles. 5. 13, 14. 20 ¹Surely he shall not ³feel quietness in his belly,
He shall not save of that which *he* desired.

21 ⁴There shall none of his meat be left ;
Therefore shall no man look for his goods.

22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits :
Every hand of the ⁵wicked shall come upon him.

23 *When* he is about to fill his belly,
God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him,
And shall rain *it* upon him ⁶while he is eating.

⁷ Num. 11.

33.

Ps. 78. 30, 31.

⁸ Isai. 24. 18.

Jer. 48. 43.

Amos. 5. 19.

⁹ ch. 16. 13.

¹⁰ ch. 18. 11.

24 ¹¹He shall flee from the iron weapon,
And the bow of steel shall strike him through.

25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body ;
Yea, ¹²the glittering sword cometh out of his gall :
¹³Terrors *are* upon him.

26 All darkness *shall* be hid in his secret places :

¹⁴A fire not blown shall consume him ;
It shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity ;
And the earth shall rise up against him.

28 The increase of his house shall depart,
And *his* goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

¹⁵ ch. 27. 13.

& 31. 2, 3.

29 ¹⁶This *is* the portion of a wicked man from God,
And the heritage ¹⁷appointed unto him by God.

CHAP. 21. BUT Job answered and said,

¹ Heb. according to the substance of his exchange.

² Heb. know.

³ Or, There shall be none left for his meat.

⁴ Or, troublesome.

⁵ Heb. of his decree from God.

he earns by hard labour, and whatever his success may be as a merchant, his wealth will bring him no joy. There is an allusion to the former estate of Job.

19. *Because he hath oppressed*] This charge had already been suggested, now Zophar assumes that it is proved by the results.

20. Render: For he knew no rest in his belly, and so shall he not be saved with that which he desired : i.e. his insatiable greed shall be punished ; what he desired will be taken from him.

21. Render: "he left nothing in his eating" (i.e. he lived as a glutton, not reserving even the fragments of his food for the poor), therefore shall his prosperity not endure.

22. *the wicked*] Or, the sufferer, i.e. all who have been brought to sorrow by him.

23. Rather, This shall come to pass ; in order to fill his belly God shall cast upon him the burning of His wrath. God's wrath shall be his meat and drink.

24-26. These verses describe the fate of a brigand slain in a foray, such as Zophar assumes may have been undertaken by Job's dependents or children.

24. *from the iron weapon*] Or, "armour," i.e. from the heavy-armed soldier.

25. Each word gives a distinct image. Conquered in the battle he flees, the steel bow sends its arrow, it reaches him, he draws it out ; but the life-blood follows the glittering point, and the "king of terrors" seizes on his prey.

26. *All darkness &c.*] Or, entire darkness is reserved for his treasures. The chief being slain, all that he has stored up remains in darkness ; he has covered it up when he set out on his foray ; there it remains until fire, kindled by no human hands, consumes it, together with all that is left in his tent.

XXI. The last speech completed all that can be insinuated against Job, but it reaches him, as yet, by implication only. Zophar states what he professes to regard as general truths ; if he describes exactly what he sees or conjectures touching Job's condition and character, he does not name him ; that last insult is reserved for the leader of the party in the last colloquy (see xxii. 5-11). Job in his answer shows that he fully understands the insinuation (xxi. 27, 28), but con-

- 2 Hear diligently my speech,
And let this be your consolations.
- 3 Suffer me that I may speak ;
And after that I have spoken, "mock on."
- 4 As for me, *is* my complaint to man ?
And if it *were so*, why should not my spirit be 'troubled ?
- 5 ²Mark me, and be astonished,
^bAnd lay *your* hand upon *your* mouth.
- 6 Even when I remember I *am* afraid,
And trembling taketh hold on my flesh.
- 7 ^cWherefore do the wicked live,
Become old, yea, are mighty in power ?^e
- 8 Their seed is established in their sight with them,
And their offspring before their eyes.
- 9 Their houses ^aare safe from fear,
^d"Neither *is* the rod of God upon them.
- 10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not ;
Their cow calveth, and ^ecasteth not her calf.
- 11 They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance.

¹ Heb. *shortened?*

² Heb. *Look unto me.*

³ Heb. *are peace from fear.*

^a ch. 18. 10.
& 17. 2.

^b Judg. 18. 19.
ch. 29. 9.
& 40. 4.
Ps. 39. 9.

^c ch. 12. 6.
Ps. 17. 10, 14.
& 73. 3, 12.
Jer. 12. 1.
Hab. 1. 16.

^d Ps. 73. 5.

^e Ex. 23. 26.

finer himself to the general argument, and in language of unparalleled boldness maintains the converse of the proposition. Far from perishing, the wicked live, grow old, keep their power, their children are established, they and theirs live and die in prosperity, joyous, careless; they renounce God openly and with complete impunity; a common fate awaits all, there is no sign of the temporal retribution of which dogmatists speak so confidently. This speech virtually closes the second day's colloquy. Its import seems to have been misunderstood: for what is the real object of the trials permitted by God but to demonstrate that goodness may exist, that a man thoroughly sincere, perfect, and righteous may hold fast his integrity though every shadow of hope connected with life be withdrawn? Job feels and declares not only that his own "hedge" has been removed, and that every conceivable calamity has befallen him, destroying the spring of life, and leaving him apparently blasted by God's wrath, an object of loathing and scorn to the representations of humanity; but also that the whole scheme of the world's history proves there is no general connexion here between goodness and happiness. Men who renounce God prosper to the end, and then but share the fate of all mankind; all lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them. Thus also with regard to the fear and love of God. Though quite convinced that it will bring no recompense Job abjures the "counsels of the wicked" (v. 16), and so proves that his innermost convictions are steadfast. The expressions, which in the extremity of his perplexity and provocation he uses, are harsh and intemperate: he dogmatizes, and lays himself open to the charge of impiety;

but the full force of his argument, and the scope and bearing of the whole transaction, could not have been brought out had any trust in a temporal restoration and renewal of prosperity remained. Satan might still have urged that fear and love were alike selfish.

2. *your consolations*] As they can find no words of comfort for their friend, Job asks them to attend to his argument.

4. The meaning of this verse appears to be: Job is not seeking an answer to his inward questionings by reference to human experience or reason; yet even if he were doing so, his trouble or "impatience" would be justified: for what does experience prove, but that wicked men may often prosper to the end, and the righteous perish without compensation?

5, 6. Job trembles at the contemplation of apparent injustice in God's dealings with His creatures.

7. The whole question is stated at once; if wickedness, as the old dogma asserts (xx. 5), brings certain and speedy destruction, how dispose of the fact that wicked men not only live, but live to advanced age, and retain their power and prosperity to the last? Cp. marg. ref.

8. The precise reverse of what Zophar (xx. 10), Bildad (xviii. 19), and Eliphaz (v. 4), had asserted, is true of the children of the wicked. Job, however, does not say that their seed is established after them, but during their life. For his own conviction, see xxvii. 14.

9. This meets xviii. 14, 15. *the rod of God upon them*] As it was on Job (ix. 34).

11. *like a flock*] Free and sportive, like flocks in the open pastures.

- 12 They take the timbrel and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the organ.
 / ch. 36. 11. 13 They ¹spend their days ¹in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the grave.
 ° ch. 22. 17. 14 ²Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us;
For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.
^a Ex. 5. 2. ^k The counsel of the wicked is far from me.
 ch. 34. 9. 15 ³What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
ⁱ ch. 35. 3. And ⁴what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?
 Mal. 3. 14. 16 Lo, their good ⁵is not in their hand:
^k ch. 22. 18. ^k The counsel of the wicked is far from me.
 Ps. 1. 1. 17 ¹How oft is the ²candle of the wicked put out!
 Prov. 1. 10. And ³how oft cometh their destruction upon them?
ⁱ ch. 18. 6. God ⁴distributeth sorrows in his anger.
^m Luke 12. 46. 18 ⁵They are as stubble before the wind,
ⁿ Ps. 1. 4. And as chaff that the storm ⁶carrieth away.
 & 35. 5. 19 God layeth up ⁷his iniquity ⁸for his children:
 Isai. 17. 13. He rewardeth him, and he shall know ⁹it.
 & 29. 5. 20 His eyes shall see his destruction,
 Hos. 13. 3. And ¹⁰he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
 ° Ex. 20. 5. 21 For what pleasure ¹¹hath he in his house after him,
 & Ps. 75. 8. When the number of his months is cut off in the midst?
 Isai. 51. 17. 22 ¹²Shall ¹³any teach God knowledge?
 Jer. 25. 15. Seeing he judgeth those that are high.
 Rev. 14. 10. 23 One dieth ¹⁴in his full strength,—being wholly at ease and quiet.
 & 19. 15. 24 His ¹⁵breasts are full of milk,
 ° Isai. 40. 13. And his bones are moistened with marrow.
 & 45. 9. 25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul,
 Rom. 11. 34. And never eateth with pleasure.
 1 Cor. 2. 16. 26 They shall ¹⁶lie down alike in the dust,
 & ch. 20. 11. And the worms shall cover them.
 Eccles. 9. 2. 27 Behold, I know your thoughts,

¹ Or, in mirth.² Or, lamp.³ Heb. *stealeth away*.⁴ That is, the punishment of his iniquity.⁵ Heb. in his very perfec-

tion, or, in the strength of his perfection.

⁶ Or, milk pails.

12. organ] Or, "the pipe;" the Pandæan pipe of reeds, or the double flute used by shepherds.

13. in a moment] Without any sickness, anguish of mind, or signs of God's displeasure. Yet even here is an undercurrent of thought leading to the true conclusion; no hope is suggested after death.

14, 15. These men therefore live and die in practical atheism. The threefold rejection should be noted—they care not to *know* God's ways, or to *serve* Him, or to be in *communion* with Him.

16. *Lo, their good is not in their hand*] The meaning appears to be, that their prosperity is not the result of their own labour, but the gift of Providence; hence in the next clause Job abjures the counsels of the wicked, and declares that, whatever betide them or him, he will not forsake God. Cp. Rom. viii. 35.

17, 18. Some prefer to take these verses as Job's challenge to his opponents to prove their assertions. "How often," he asks, "does it happen, as you say, that the torch of the wicked is put out? that calamity comes

upon them? that God apportioneth sorrows (or snares) to them? that they are as straw before the wind, as chaff which the storm takes suddenly away?"

19-21. The first clause states the dogma. "God," you say, "reserves a man's guilt (i.e. its punishment) for his children": Job answers, "Let God requite the man himself, and he shall know it: his own eyes would then see his ruin; he would, as he deserves, drink himself the wrath of the Almighty. If the number of his own months be completed (i.e. if he has lived out his allotted time), what cares he about the prosperity of his house after him?"

22. Job infers from facts, that any attempts to lay down a plan for the divine government must be futile. God "judgeth the high," either the Angels, or more probably those who presume to scan the secrets of His Will. Cp. Ps. cxxxi. 1.

24. *His breasts*] "Sides," or "pails." The Hebrew word occurs only in this passage, and its meaning is doubtful.

And the devices *which* yo wrongfully imagine against me.

28 For ye say, 'Where *is* the house of the prince?

* ch. 20. 7.

And where *are* ¹the dwelling places of the wicked?

29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way?

And do ye not know their tokens,

30 'That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction?

* Prov. 16. 4.

They shall be brought forth to ²the day of wrath.

2 Pet. 2. 9.

31 Who shall declare his way ³to his face?

* Gal. 2. 11.

And who shall repay him *what* he hath done?

32 Yet shall he be brought to the ³grave,

And shall ⁴remain in the tomb.

33 The clods of ⁵the valley shall be sweet *unto* him,

* Heb. 9. 27.

And ⁶every man shall draw after him,

As *there are* innumerable before him.

34 How then comfort ye me in vain,

Seeing in your answers there remaineth ⁷falsehood?

CHAP. 22. THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 ⁸Can a man be profitable unto God,

* ch. 35. 7.

⁹As he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

Ps. 16. 2.

3 *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?

Luke 17. 10.

Or *is it* gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

4 Will he reprove thee for fear of thee?

Will he enter with thee into judgment?

5 *Is not* thy wickedness great?—and thine iniquities infinite?

6 For thou hast ¹⁰taken a pledge from thy brother for nought,

* Dent. 24. 10.

And ¹¹stripped the naked of their clothing.

ch. 24. 3, 9.

7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,

Ezek. 18. 12.

And thou ¹²hast withholden bread from the hungry.

* See ch. 31.

¹ Heb. *the tent of the tabernacles of the wicked.*

⁴ Heb. *watch in the heap.*

⁷ *pend thereon?*

² Heb. *the day of wraths.*

⁶ Heb. *transgression?*

¹¹ Heb. *stripped the clothes of the naked.*

³ Heb. *graves.*

¹⁰ Or, *if he may be profitable, doth his good success de-*

¹² *Deut. 15. 7. Isai. 58. 7. Ezek. 18. 7, 16. Matt. 25. 42.*

29-32. Job bids his opponents ask the merest passers-by, the least observant of men, what experience tells them? what are their "tokens," i.e. the accounts they have to give of the past, and the lessons which they have learned from them? Is it not that the wicked, far from being cut off, are actually preserved *at* (not "to") the day of destruction, and brought forth (i.e. removed out of the way) in the day of wrath? Job does not assert that this is universally the case, but that it occurs so often as to invalidate the conclusions of his opponents.

31. The probable meaning is; "Who brings the wicked man's sins home to him? who accuses and punishes him?"

32. *shall remain in the tomb*] Or, "shall watch over his tomb." Job asserts that so far from the remembrance of the wicked perishing for ever, it survives his death, and is preserved by his sepulchre. Job had, perhaps, before his mind a sarcophagus, on which was placed the recumbent figure of the deceased, and the inscription on which would illustrate the expression "he watches over his tomb." Egyptian monuments of a date far earlier than that attributed to Job, contain inscriptions consisting mainly of adulations that no man shall violate the resting-place.

33. *sweet unto him*] The grave is but a place of rest to him, earth lies light upon him in his fair and honoured resting-place. Job sees all this; but it neither leads him to give up the cause of goodness, nor tempts him to turn away from God.

XXII.-XXVI. See Intro. p. 3.

2. *as he that is wise &c.*] Render, **Nay, for the wise man profits himself**, the benefit comes to him, not to God, though it comes from Him.

4. *for fear of thee*] This seems to imply a claim to consideration amounting to reverence or fear; but the meaning may be, "will God reprove thee for thy fear of Him, can He punish thee for piety? Nay, the reproof and judgment presuppose and prove thy guilt."

6. *for nought*] i.e. without cause or reasonable motive, not being in need of it. The charge is suggested by the opportunities of oppression which Job, as a rich man, must have had, and is assumed to have used.

the naked] Here, as elsewhere (cp. Isai. xx. 2; John xxi. 7; James ii. 15), the "thinly clad." The act would have been illegal in Palestine (Ezek. xxii. 25-27).

- 8 But *as for* ¹the mighty man, he had the earth;
And the ²honourable man dwelt in it.
- 9 Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of ³the fatherless have been broken.
- 10 Therefore ⁴snare *are* round about thee,
And sudden fear troubleth thee;
- 11 Or, darkness, *that* thou canst not see;
And abundance of ⁵waters cover thee.
- 12 *Is* not God in the height of heaven?
And behold ⁶the height of the stars, how high they are!
- 13 And thou sayest, ⁷How doth God know?
Can he judge through the dark cloud?
- 14 ⁸Thick clouds *are* a covering to him, that he seeth not;
And he walketh in the circuit of heaven.
- 15 Hast thou marked the old way—which wicked men have
trodden?
- 16 Which ⁹were cut down out of time,
¹⁰Whose foundation was overflown with a flood:
- 17 ¹¹Which said unto God, Depart from us:
And ¹²what can the Almighty do ¹³for them?
- 18 Yet he filled their houses with good *things*:
But ¹⁴the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
- 19 ¹⁵The righteous see *it*, and are glad:
And the innocent laugh them to scorn.
- 20 Whereas our ¹⁶substance is not cut down,
But ¹⁷the remnant of them the fire consumeth.
- 21 Acquaint now thyself ¹⁸with him, and ¹⁹be at peace:
Thereby good shall come unto thee.

¹ Heb. *the man of arm.*⁴ Or, *What.*⁶ Or, *to them?*² Heb. *eminent,* or, *accepted for countenance.*⁵ Heb. *a flood was poured upon their foundation,*
Gen. 7. 11. 2 Pet. 2. 5.⁷ Or, *estate.*³ Heb. *the head of the stars.*⁸ Or, *their excellency.*⁹ That is, *with God.*

8. *honourable men*] Rather, *men accepted for favour*, lit. "countenance," i.e. favourites with no deserts. According to Eliphaz, Job had employed his riches in maintaining sturdy supporters of his injustice, and surrounding himself with favourites.

9. Job answers this in xxix. 12, 13, xxxi. 16, 18. No charge could affect him more deeply.

11. Render, *Or seest thou not the darkness and deluge of waters that covers thee?* Eliphaz assumes that Job cannot see his afflictions in their true light. There is evidently here a reference to the Deluge mentioned below (v. 16).

12-20. In spite of what Job had said to the contrary (xxi. 16), Eliphaz presumes that he adopts the principles of men who rejoice in unjust prosperity, and repeats (v. 18) his words as a bitter taunt.

12. *the height of the stars*] See the marg. The expression probably means "the highest of the stars."

14. *circuit*] Or, *vault*. Eliphaz assumes that Job had adopted the notion that God confines His care to the heaven where He dwells, ignoring all earthly concerns (cp.

Ezek. viii. 12, ix. 9: Ps. lxxiii. 11, xciv. 7).

15. *Hast thou marked*] Rather, *wilt thou keep?*

16. *cut down out of time*] i.e. "were seized by an untimely end," or caught and borne away by the flood.

whose foundation &c.] Render, *their foundation flowed away as a river; i.e.* their houses were undermined by the stream (the Deluge), which dissolved the foundations.

17. *for them*] The marginal rendering is correct. Job is represented as asking, "What doth the Almighty do to them?" See xxi. 19, 29 notes.

19. Eliphaz contrasts all this train of argument with the feelings of men of true piety, who, as he characteristically assumes, confident in God's righteousness, look on all such temporary phenomena with cheerfulness, and laugh at the boastings of the wicked.

20. The meaning appears to be, *Of a truth our opponents are cut down, and fire devoureth their remains.*

21-30. Eliphaz exhorts Job to a speedy

- 22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,
And ¹lay up his words in thine heart. ² Ps. 119. 11.
- 23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up,
Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. ³ ch. 8. 5, 6.
& 11. 13, 14.
- 24 Then shalt thou ¹lay up gold ^{1a}as dust,
And the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. ² Chr. 1. 15.
- 25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy ²defence,
And thou shalt have ³plenty of silver.
- 26 For then shalt thou have thy ⁴delight in the Almighty,
And ⁵shalt lift up thy prayer unto God. ⁶ ch. 27. 10.
Isai. 58. 14.
- 27 ⁷Thou shalt ⁸make thy prayer unto him,
And he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. ⁹ ch. 11. 15.
¹⁰ Ps. 60. 14,
15.
Isai. 58. 9.
- 28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee:
- And the light shall shine upon thy ways.
- 29 When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, *There is lifting up;*
And ¹¹he shall save ¹²the humble person. ¹³ Prov. 29.
23.
- 30 ¹⁴He shall deliver the island of the innocent:
And it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands. Jam. 4. 6.
1 Pet. 5. 5.

CHAP. 23. THEN Job answered and said,

2 Even to day is my complaint bitter:

¹ Or, ~~on~~ the dust.

² Or, gold.

³ Heb. silver of strength.

⁴ Heb. him that hath low eyes.

⁵ Or, The innocent shall deliver the island, Gen. 18. 26, &c.

repentance, which, he assures him, will be immediately rewarded by abundance of wealth. In this passage (e.g. v. 24) is found the true key to the character of Eliphaz, denoted by his significant name (ii. 11 note).

21. *Acquaint thyself*] i.e. "be in communion," on terms of loving, or of profitable (it is the same word as in v. 2) intercourse with God. In this admonition there is a strong alloy of selfishness.

good] Not goodness, but good fortune.

22. *the law*] Or, "a law;" there is no reference to the Mosaic Law. See Introd. p. 1.

23. *thou shalt be built up*] The reading is probably correct; but the LXX. have "and if thou shalt be humbled."

put away] Assuming (like Zophar, xi. 14) that Job's tents were filled with secret spoils.

24. *lay up gold as dust*] Or, "and lay down treasure in the dust, and Ophir in the stones of the torrents." For Ophir, see Gen. x. 29 note. [If Ophir be placed in India, it is probably to be identified with Abhira, at the mouth of the Indus].

25. *defence*] Or, *treasures*; the same word as "gold" in v. 24.

plenty of silver] See marg. rendering: **silver of mighty efforts**, drawing out and rewarding all man's energies. Contrast Job's words (xxviii. 15-19). Some critics, deriving the word from another root, would render it "most precious or excellent silver;" but the expression which denotes great effort, is specially applicable to silver, to extract and purify which re-

quires considerable labour; so that its possession indicates a certain development of industry and progress in civilization. See xxviii. 1 note.

27. An exhortation which, taken in connexion with the context, implies that a man's prosperity gives him a stronger claim upon God's favour.

30. *the island of the innocent*] Render, "the not innocent," i.e. even those who are guilty. **He will deliver even the guilty; he shall be delivered by the pureness of thy hand.** The highest privilege God vouchsafes to His servants is that of effectual intercession (see xlii. 7, 8).

This speech brings the whole argument on the side of Job's opponents to a close. In the following answer Job can but repeat arguments which, though unanswered, have been rejected with scorn.

XXIII., XXIV. Job answers Eliphaz, and exhausts arguments previously urged. God hiding Himself from innocent suffering; every kind of crime committed without any manifestation of God's wrath:—these are mysteries which Job calls on his friends to explain. It is Job's great misery that he cannot find God; far from believing that the inexplicable indications of injustice prove that God in His essential attributes is unjust, Job is sure that when God does manifest Himself, the righteous cause must prosper; he remains one who, though prostrated by adversity, and relinquishing all struggles as utterly useless, still cleaves to goodness and to God. ●

2. This verse may be understood to mean either: "Even to-day (after all that has

- ¹ My stroke is heavier than my groaning.
^a ch. 13. 3. ³ ^a Oh that I knew where I might find him !
^{& 16. 21.} *That I might come even to his seat !*
⁴ I would order *my* cause before him,
 And fill my mouth with arguments.
⁵ I would know the words *which* he would answer me,
 And understand what he would say unto me.
^b Is. 27. 4, 8. ⁶ ^b Will he plead against me with *his* great power ?
^{& 57. 16.} No ; but he would put *strength* in me.
⁷ There the righteous might dispute with him ;
 So should I be delivered for ever from my judge.
^c ch. 9. 11. ⁸ ^c Behold, I go forward, but he *is* not *there* ;
 And backward, but I cannot perceive him :
⁹ On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him* :
 He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him* :
^d Ps. 139. 1, ¹⁰ But he ^d knoweth ^e the way that I take :
^{2. 3.} *When* ^e he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
^e Ps. 17. 3. ¹¹ ^f My foot hath held his steps,
^{& 66. 10.} His way have I kept, and not declined.
^{Jam. 1. 12.} ¹² Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips ;
^f Ps. 44. 18. ³ ^g I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than ⁴ my neces-
^g John 4. 32, ^{34.} sary food.
^h ch. 9. 12, 13. ¹³ But he *is* in one *mind*, and ^h who can turn him ?
^{& 12. 14.} And *what* ⁱ his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.
^{Rom. 9. 19.} ¹⁴ For he performeth *the thing that is* ^k appointed for me :
ⁱ Ps. 115. 3. And many such *things are* with him.
^k 1 Thess. 3. 3. ¹⁵ Therefore am I troubled at his presence :
 When I consider, I am afraid of him.
^l Ps. 22. 14. ¹⁶ For God ^l maketh my heart soft,—and the Almighty troubleth
 me :
¹⁷ Because I was not cut off before the darkness,
Neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

¹ Heb. *my hand*.² Heb. *the way that is with me*.³ Heb. *I have hid*, or, *laid up*.⁴ Or, *my appointed portion*.

been said) my complaint is (held by my opponents to be) bitter," i.e. rebellious and inexcusable, "and yet the hand of God is heavier upon me than my groaning." Or, more simply, "True, my complaint is very bitter, but it is justified by my affliction." "Even to-day" confirms the view that the discussion continued several days.

^{3. seat} i.e. judgment-seat (Ps. ix. 7, 8).

^{6. No ; &c.} Rather, **Nay, even He will not impute aught to me.**

^{7.} This passage proves that Job knows that when God manifests Himself the cause of righteousness is assured ; there can be no unrighteousness with Him.

^{8, 9.} The efforts of the soul to find Him Whom it seeks were never described more truly or affectingly. Job's conviction of God's absolute Presence comes out most strongly when he feels that he cannot discern Him.

The words "forward," "backward," "left," and "right" hand, mean respectively to the east, west, north, and south.

The Orientals stood with their faces eastward in marking the cardinal points.

^{10. the way that I take} The marginal rendering is more forcible ; i.e. the way in which I habitually walk.

^{when} Omit this word.

^{12. esteemed} Or, as in the margin, "hid," laid up as a precious treasure.

^{more than my necessary food} Rather, **more than my own law**, i.e. the law of my own mind, my own will. See Rom. vii. 23.

^{13. in one mind} Or, "He is in one," i.e. changes not. In all which befalls Job, God carries out the purpose of His own inscrutable will.

^{15. at his presence} The *unseen* Presence. Job longs for His manifested Presence.

^{16. soft} In the sense of weak, crushed, as a bruised reed.

^{troubleth} fillet me with terror and confusion.

^{17. before the darkness} i.e. before these woes came upon me. Cp. iii. 10.

^{covered the darkness} i.e. saved or preserved me from seeing this great sorrow.

CHAP. 24. WHY, seeing "times are not hidden from the Almighty," Acts 1. 7.

Do they that know him not see his days?

- 2 Some remove the ^blandmarks;
They violently take away flocks, and ¹feed *thereof*.
- 3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless,
They ^ctake the widow's ox for a pledge.
- 4 They turn the needy out of the way:
^d"The poor of the earth hide themselves together.
- 5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert,
Go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey:
The wilderness *yieldeth* food for them *and* for their children.
- 6 They reap *every one* his ²corn in the field:
And ³they gather the vintage of the wicked.
- 7 They ^ecause the naked to lodge without clothing,
That *they have* no covering in the cold.
- 8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains,
And ^fembrace the rock for want of a shelter.
- 9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast,
And take a pledge of the poor.
- 10 They cause *him* to go naked without clothing,
And they take away the sheaf *from* the hungry:
- 11 Which make oil within their walls,
And tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.
- 12 Men groan from out of the city,
And the soul of the wounded crieth out:
Yet God layeth not folly to them.
- 13 They are of those that rebel against the light;
They know not the ways thereof,

^b Deut. 19. 14.
& 27. 17.
Prov. 22. 28.
& 23. 10.
Hos. 5. 10.
^c Deut. 24. 6,
10, 12, 17.
ch. 22. 6.
^d Prov. 28. 28.

^e Ex. 22. 26,
27.
Deut. 24. 12,
13.
ch. 22. 6.
^f Lam. 4. 5.

¹ Or, feed them.

² Heb. mingled corn, or, dredge.

³ Heb. the wicked gather the vintage.

XXIV. 1. Some translate, "Why are not times appointed by the Almighty, and (why) do they, who know Him, not see His ways?" The expression "times" points to the vindication of God's righteousness by the punishment of sinners, the "days of the Lord," to the restoration of the righteous.

2-4. These verses describe the results of an apparent withholding, or delay of judgment (cp. Eccles. viii. 11).

2. and feed *thereof*] Or, as in marg., and feed them; treating them openly as their own property, without fear of justice.

4. They turn the needy out of the way] i.e. they compel them to seek by-ways, in order to escape from their violence (cp. Judg. v. 6).

5-9. These verses describe the condition of the wretched persons driven out from their abodes by oppression. They prowl in the desert, at once desperate and pitiless. Robbery is "their work;" the wilderness is food: it furnishes support by the only occupation there practised, viz. by plunder.

6. They reap &c.] Or, in the tilled land they gather their fodder; i.e. in order to procure it they make incursions into the "field," the cultivated district. They plunder also the vineyards of men notorious for evil lives, and therefore not likely to be protected by their neighbours.

7. Or, they pass the night naked, without clothing; a practice still continued by the Bedouins.

9-11. Verses descriptive of the villain of civilized life.

9. The usurer seizes the children of his debtor even at the mother's breast (vi. 27, note); and "they take from the poor all that he has for a pledge."

10. Or, They go about naked, without clothing, and bear the sheaf hungry. The clothing has been taken by the creditor, and they are compelled to work without wages or food.

11. Or, Within their walls they press oil, wine-presses tread they and thirst. Contrast this treatment with the injunctions of Moses (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; xxv. 4).

12. God layeth not folly] Or, God regardeth not the folly. i.e. so far as men can see (v. 1), God doth not regard the strange and unintelligible course of events. The word "folly" is chosen with reference to the subversion of all intelligible principles of government.

13-17. A class of still more desperate offenders; the words of v. 13 imply antagonism and wilful ignorance; they ignore the ways of light.

Nor abide in the paths thereof.

- ^a Ps. 10. 8. 14 ^aThe murderer rising with the light—killeth the poor and needy,
And in the night is as a thief.
^b Prov. 7. 9. 15 ^bThe eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight^f,
^c Ps. 10. 11. ^cSaying, No eye shall see me :—and ^ddisguiseth *his* face.
16 In the dark they dig through houses,
Which they had marked for themselves in the daytime :
^e John 3. 20. ^eThey know not the light.
17 For the morning ^{is} to them even as the shadow of death :
If one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.
18 He ^{is} swift as the waters ;—their portion is cursed in the earth :
He beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.
19 Drought and heat ²consume the snow waters :
So doth the grave those which have sinned.
20 The womb shall forget him ;
The worm shall feed sweetly on him ;
^f Prov. 10. 7. ^fHe shall be no more remembered ;
And wickedness shall be broken as a tree.
21 He evil entreateth the barren *that* beareth not :
And doeth not good to the widow.
22 He draweth also the mighty with his power :
He riseth up, ³and no *man* is sure of life.
23 *Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth ;*
^g Ps. 11. 4. Yet ^ghis eyes *are* upon their ways.
^h Prov. 15. 3. 24 They are exalted for a little while,
But ⁴are gone and brought low ;
They are ⁵taken out of the way as all *other*,

¹ Heb. setteth his face in secret.

² Heb. violently take.

³ Or, he trusteth not his own life.

⁴ Heb. are not.

⁵ Heb. closed up.

15. *the twilight*] Or, gloom; the deep gloom of eventide.

disguiseth his face] With a thick veil, which in the Hauran is still called *sitr* (the word here used by Job). Since such a veil was worn only by women, it seems likely that the adulterer concealed himself by putting on female attire.

16. Or, In darkness they break through houses ; by day they fasten themselves in &c. The description of the housebreaker.

17. Or, For to them morning is altogether darkness ; for each of them knows the terrors of darkness. The meaning of the first clause is clear ; light is to them darkness ; they shrink from it ; and they do so, because, as the second clause probably means, every one of them is familiar with what to other men are the terrors of darkness, and in them they find accomplices and friends.

18-20. These verses contain one answer to the question, what is the destiny of the enemy of light ? They perish, but there are no unmistakeable proofs that their death has a judicial character.

18. Or, Light is he on the face of the waters ; cursed is their property in the land ; he returns no more to the vineyard. The criminal perishes suddenly, disappears

like a bubble on the water : the place where he dwelt is execrated, but he is not there to feel it ; he goes no more to his vineyard, and knows nought of the disgrace which attaches to his name.

19. 20. Suddenly and completely, as snow in burning heat, the criminal is lost to human sight in the grave : he is broken as a tree, cut off it may be by sudden death, but all is then over ; he has no more to fear.

21. Job now puts the criminal of high rank before us ; who scoffs at the childless and the widow ; who surrounds himself with strong and unscrupulous partisans.

22. Or, He riseth up, though he despaired of life : *i.e.* the ruffian is delivered from judgment by his patron.

23. Or, He (God) granteth him to be in security, and he is supported : His eyes are over their ways : words which describe the good fortune of the malefactor when he has once escaped from judgment.

24. Or, They are exalted ; after a little they are gone, they are brought low, like all mankind they are gathered, &c.

Job therefore declares in these verses (21-24) that, far from living in terror, the evil-doer is in perfect security ; he rises to eminence, and dies, not until he

And cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

25 And if *it be* not so now, who will make me a liar,
And make my speech nothing worth?

CHAP. 25. THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 Dominion and fear *are* with him,
He maketh peace in his high places.

3 Is there any number of his armies?
And upon whom doth not ^ahis light arise?

4 ^bHow then can man be justified with God?
Or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?

5 Behold ever^d to the moon, and it shineth not;
Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

6 How much less man, *that is* ^ea worm?
And the son of man, *which is* a worm?

^a Jam. 1. 17.
^b ch. 4. 17.
^c &c.
^d & 15. 14, &c.
^e Ps. 130. 3.
& 143. 2.
^f Ps. 22. 6.

CHAP. 26. BUT Job answered and said,

2 How hast thou helped *him that is* without power?
How savest thou the arm *that hath* no strength?

3 How hast thou counselled *him that hath* no wisdom?
And *how* hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?

has reached his full term of life, like corn ripe for the harvest. In all this wild exaggeration there is an underground of fact. It would have been easy to prove that such is not the general result of an evil life; but nothing short of a clear proof that no innocent man is ever overwhelmed by misfortune, and no guilty man ever escapes it, would have served to overthrow Job's position. The mystery is unsolved; Job does not doubt that God has a solution; he is sure that his opponents have not.

XXV. Bildad leaves unnoticed the question raised by Job, and simply repeats two common-places, the omnipotence of God and the uncleanness of man, which had been repeatedly urged and illustrated by Job himself. Hence follows the duty of unreserved submission, an inference which Bildad leaves to be drawn by the hearer; man is naturally unclean; how then can he be justified by Him Who discerns impurity in the very heavens?

2. *his high places*] i.e. heaven (xvi. 19). All contentions between the inhabitants of heaven are subdued by God's power: the inference suggested is, how then can He permit man to contend with Him?

3. *his armies*] His Angels and all the physical and spiritual powers of the universe (xxxviii. 19-37; Ps. ciii. 21, civ. 4). Hence the great name Jehovah of "Sabaoth."

doth not his light arise] His light shineth over all, above all, so that the brightest children of light are but dark in comparison; their light is but a dim reflection of His, and is lost in His effulgence.

XXVI.-XXXI. In these chapters Job reviews, and sums up the whole controversy. He adopts all that is substantially true in the arguments of his opponents; and recedes from positions, which, though tenable against

them, do not really accord with his own principles, or truly represent the results of his own experience (see xxvii. 2, 13 notes). This recantation of arguments upon which Job had laid so much stress, is satisfactorily accounted for by the fact that the reader has been prepared for it by Bildad's abandonment of all further argument: and vigorously as Job had maintained propositions, which he here recalls, it is evident throughout, that the conviction of God's righteousness lay far deeper; the current of thought which carried him away was but superficial, and yielded to the mighty tide of feeling, when the depths of his heart were brought into motion. In ch. xxviii. he turns to the great principle, which shows the futility of all speculations touching apparent difficulties or inequalities in God's government. Man has marvellous faculties; but he has not that wisdom which can penetrate God's secrets and comprehend His ways. Wisdom, in that sense, belongs to God, it is His alone; all the wisdom and understanding of man is summed up in the fear of God and in the hatred of sin. With this declaration Job disposes of the whole argument; he does not profess to account for his own sufferings, or for any inexplicable events in the world's history: of one thing he is sure, that he who fears God and departs from evil, hath the true secret of life and eternity. In the three following chapters Job takes a review of his whole life: the conclusion of which is, that he holds fast to his integrity, but remains in a state of absolute perplexity touching the cause of his terrible sufferings (ch. xxx).

3. *the thing as it is*] Or, *sound sense* (see v. 12 note), the precise opposite of vague, common-place declamation, such as Bildad's.

4 To whom hast thou uttered words?
And whose spirit came from thee?

5 Dead things are formed

From under the waters,¹ and the inhabitants thereof.

6 ^aHell is naked before him,—and destruction hath no covering.

7 ^bHe stretched out the north over the empty place,
And hangeth the earth upon nothing.

8 ^cHe bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds;
And the cloud is not rent under them.

9 He holdeth back the face of his throne,
And spreadeth his cloud upon it.

10 ^dHe hath compassed the waters with bounds,
²Until the day and night come to an end.

11 The pillars of heaven tremble—and are astonished at his reproach.

12 ^eHe divideth the sea with his power,
And by his understanding he smiteth through ³the proud.

13 ^fBy his spirit he hath garnished the heavens;
His hand hath formed ^gthe crooked serpent.

^a Ps. 139. 8.
11.
Prov. 15. 11.
Heb. 4. 13.
^b ch. 9. 8.
Ps. 24. 2.
& 104. 2, &c.
^c Prov. 30. 4.

^d ch. 38. 8.
Ps. 33. 7.
& 104. 9.
Prov. 8. 29.
Jer. 5. 22.
^e Ex. 14. 21.
Ps. 74. 13.
Isai. 51. 15.
Jer. 31. 35.
^f Ps. 33. 6.
^g Isai. 27. 1.

¹ Or, with the inhabitants.

² Heb. until the end of light
with darkness.

³ Heb. pride.

4. To whom] *i.e.* by implication not to him (Job), since the words have no bearing whatever upon his arguments.

whose spirit] As though Bildad had derived his inspiration from Eliphaz, or from tradition, not from God.

5. Job pauses: he will derive his own inspiration from God.

Dead things &c.] Or, "the dead (the Rephaim) are convulsed under the waters and the inhabitants thereof." Rephaim is the name of an extinct race of giants; but here, and elsewhere, applied to the shades of the departed. The dead sleep; but God's will reaches them, rouses them below the depths of ocean peopled by monster forms. This statement coincides with many vague allusions to the condition of the disembodied spirit. The A.V. "are formed" rests upon a different, and, in itself, a defensible interpretation.

6. destruction] In Hebrew "Abaddon," the abyss of the bottomless pit; a region impenetrable save to God's eye (xxviii. 22, xxxi. 12; Ps. lxxviii. 11).

7. the north] The firmament, extending, as the ancient Semites conceived, from the northern point indicated by the polar star, over the apparently empty space of our atmosphere. The words employed here and in other passages of Holy Scripture do not convey the impression of substance or of metallic solidity, as is frequently asserted, but simply of expansion; they are vague, indefinite, just what they ought to be to express the impressions made upon an observant mind, careful not to substitute speculations for facts. Some take the "north" to mean the great mountain-range.

upon nothing] How Job knew the truth, demonstrated by astronomy, that the earth hangs self-poised in empty space, is a ques-

tion not easily solved by those who deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture.

8. in his thick clouds] A figurative expression, meaning that the fall of rain is determined by laws which Job refers to the will and direct agency of God.

9, 10. Render,

He covers the face of His Throne,

He expands His cloud over it;

He compasseth the waters with a line,

To the confine of light and darkness.

The words seem to describe the gathering together of thick clouds before a heavy thunderstorm. God covers the vault of Heaven (above which is the invisible abode of His Majesty) with dense clouds, which He compasseth, *i.e.* extends in a continually expanding circle until it reaches the horizon marking the limits of light and darkness.

11. The breaking of the storm follows: to the poet's ear the prolonged echoes of the thunder are the voices of the mountains expressing their consternation at the rebuke of God.

12. He divideth] Or, agitates. He causes the upheaving of the stormy waves.

the proud] Or, Rahab (see ix. 13 note): here the word means the power of evil represented by the monsters of the deep, a lively and terrible type of the agencies of destruction and disorder.

13. Or, By His breath the heavens are bright, *lit. brightness.* The calm succeeds the storm, when the latter has done its work.

his hand &c.] Render, hath wounded the flying dragon, probably like the Egyptian Apophis, an emblem or personification of darkness and evil. When God disperses darkness, He is said to wound the enemy who flees before Him. The expression is common in the New Testament, but is

14 Lo, these *are* parts of his ways:

But how little a portion is heard of him?

But the thunder of his power who can understand?

CHAP. 27. MOREOVER Job ¹continued his parable, and said,

2 As God liveth, ^a*who* hath taken away my judgment;

^a ch. 34. 5.

And the Almighty, *who* hath ²vexed my soul;

3 All the while my breath *is* in me,
And ³the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils;

4 My lips shall not speak wickedness,
Nor my tongue utter deceit.

5 God forbid that I should justify you: •
Till I die ⁴I will not remove mine integrity from me.

^b ch. 2. 9.

6 My righteousness I ⁵hold fast, and will not let it go:
^a*My heart shall not reproach me* ⁶so long as I live.

^c ch. 2. 3.

^d Acts 24. 16.

7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked,
And he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

8 ^eFor what *is* the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained,
When God taketh away his soul?

^e Matt. 16.

9 Will God hear his cry—when trouble cometh upon him?

26.

Luke 12. 20.

10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty?

^f ch. 35. 12.

Will he always call upon God?

Ps. 18. 41.

11 I will teach you ⁶by the hand of God:

& 109. 7.

That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

Prov. 1. 28.

& 28. 9.

12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it;

Isai. 1. 15.

Why then are ye thus altogether vain?

Jer. 14. 12.

Ezek. 8. 18.

Mic. 3. 4.

John 9. 31.

Jam. 4. 3.

^g See ch. 22.

26, 27.

¹ Heb. *added to take up.*

³ That is, *the breath which*

⁴ Heb. *from my days.*

² Heb. *made my soul bitter,*
Ruth 1. 20. 2 Kin. 4. 27.

God gave him. Gen. 2. 7.

⁵ Or, *being in the hand,* &c.

there applied exclusively to spiritual realities.

14. "Parts" or "ends," *i.e.* the mere outskirts of His ways: "portion" or *whisper*: if that mere whisper, faint mutterings of His word, be grand and terrible, what then must be the full thunder?

XXVII. 2. *As God liveth*] Job, now for the first time, swears by the living God, his "witness" and "redeemer." "God hath taken his judgment away" is an expression carefully chosen to imply "withholding" not "perversion." Job, throughout this discourse, corrects his former assertions; he holds fast the conviction that his afflictions are not a punishment due for his offences, but he no longer charges God with injustice.

3. *All the while &c.]* Or, *For whole even now is my breath in me.* This verse is parenthetical; it asserts that notwithstanding his anguish, his breath (*i.e.* the living principle, which God "breathed into his nostrils, and whereby He made him a living soul.") is sound, capable of knowing and holding what is true and right.

5. *justify you]* *i.e.* admit you to be in the right.

6. *my heart &c.]* *Fit. My heart doth not reproach one of my days.* Conscience cannot fix upon any season of his life in which

he had committed crimes meriting such chastisement. Cp. 1 Cor. iv. 4.

7. Job means that such wickedness as false representation of his feelings and convictions can never be committed by him.

8. *gained]* *i.e.* wrongfully gained. This verse is one of the strongest passages which prove Job's faith in the immortality of the living principle. If that were annihilated, or eternally unconscious, what question could there be about hope?

10. *always call]* Note the extreme beauty and delicacy of the term by which Job thus unconsciously bears witness to his own inward faith, hope, and piety.

11. This implies that Job is now going to state exactly what he believes touching the hand of God, *i.e.* the true character of the Divine dispensation. This prepares us for a modification of previous statements (vi. 4).

12. *it]* *i.e.* the facts, which he is now about to state, but misapplied by them altogether, when, having no cause whatever to suspect Job's integrity, they represented his sufferings as proofs of guilt. Given two facts, God's wrath against sin and Job's piety, the only inference which they ought to have drawn from the aspect of his misery was, that God's judgments are unsearchable, and that sooner or later His "righteous servant" would be justified.

- ^a ch. 20.²⁹. 13 ^aThis is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the heritage of oppressors, *which* they shall receive of the
Almighty.
- ^d Deut. 28. 41. 14 ^dIf his children be multiplied, *it is* for the sword :
^{Esth. 9. 10.} And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
^{Hos. 9. 13.}
- 15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death :
^k Ps. 78. 64. And ^khis widows shall not weep.
- 16 Though he heap up silver as the dust,
And prepare raiment as the clay ;
- ⁱ Prov. 28. 8. 17 He may prepare *it*, but ⁱthe just shall put *it* on,
^{Eccles. 2. 26.} And the innocent shall divide the silver.
- 18 He buildeth his house^f as a moth,
And ^mas a booth *that* the keeper maketh.
- 19 The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered :
He openeth his eyes, and he *is* not.
- ⁿ ch. 18. 11. 20 ⁿTerrors take hold on him as waters,
A tempest stealeth him away in the night.
- 21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth :
And as a storm hurleth him out of his place.
- 22 For *God* shall cast upon him, and not spare :
¹He would fain flee out of his hand.
- 23 *Men* shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.
- CHAP. 28.** SURELY there is ²a vein for the silver,
And a place for gold *where* they fine *it*.

¹ Heb. *in fleeing he would flee.*² Or, *a mine.*

13. *This*] *i.e.* what follows. The frequent combination of prosperity with injustice is a fact of experience ; so long as the combination lasts the wicked have not their portion, nor have the oppressors their heritage ; but have it they must and will. This was not so much a change, as a clearing up, of Job's inward conviction. He had complained, not that God had no days of retribution, but that His people could not see them (xxiv. 1) ; the terms in which he had repudiated the counsel of the wicked (xxi. 16) proved a consciousness that all the appearances, on which they relied, and of which he can give no account, must, after all, be fallacious.

14. A correction of his previous statement (xx. 8).

15. *buried in death*] Or, "by death." Death will be their only apparitor, no friends, no consolors, no widow will stand by the inheritor of the curse.

16. *raiment*] In which the wealth of the ancients consisted to a great extent (cp. Matt. vi. 19 ; James v. 2).

18. *as a moth*] On the supposition that the middle letters of the Hebrew word have fallen out, some read "as a spider" (cp. viii. 14).

a booth] The light, moveable tent, set up for watchers in vineyards or fruit-gardens. Both figures in this verse represent the rapidity and ease with which the fortunes of a bad man are built up, and the still greater ease with which they are overthrown.

19. Probably, "He lieth down rich, but it (his wealth) shall not be gathered ;" *i.e.* before the harvest is gathered in he will perish ; or, "he will do it no more."

he is not] No sooner awake than he is slain. Cp. xxiv. 24 ; 2 K. xix. 35.

20. In selecting special instances of visitation Job may have referred to well-known events, such *e.g.* as the Deluge, or the destruction of the cities of the plain ; but the one point which he has at heart is to vindicate himself from misrepresentation. Great as his own calamities had been, they had been different in kind from those which he describes ; above all, instead of seeking to flee from God's hand, all that he longed for was to be visited by Him in judgment ; and, far from expecting that lasting infamy would attach to his memory, he looked for a vindication of his righteousness in the sight of men.

XXVIII. 1-11. These verses are remarkable for the singularly accurate and graphic descriptions of the processes of miners. In very remote ages there were gold mines in Egypt ; silver was brought from the far East by Phœnician merchants ; iron was found, and copper mines were worked in the Sinaitic Peninsula by Egyptians from the 3rd dynasty, at least some thousand years before Job, until the 19th dynasty. The writer and his contemporaries must have been acquainted with the operations, but probably as matters exciting astonishment by their novelty and strangeness. A great chieftain,

- 2 Iron is taken out of the ¹earth,
And brass *is* molten out of the stone.
- 3 He setteth an end to darkness,
And searcheth out all perfection:
The stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.
- 4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant;
Even the waters forgotten of the foot:
They are dried up, they are gone away from men.
- 5 As for the earth, out of it cometh bread:
And under it is turned up as it were fire.
- 6 The stones of it are the place of sapphires:
And it hath ²dust of gold.
- 7 *There is* a path which no fowl knoweth,
And which the vulture's eye hath not seen:
- 8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it,
Nor the fierce lion passed by it.
- 9 He putteth forth his hand upon the ³rock;
He overturneth the mountains by the roots.
- 10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks;
And his eye seeth every precious thing.

¹ Or, *dust*.² Or, *gold ore*.³ Or, *flint*.

whose camels would be employed in transporting the productions of various regions, would have had opportunities of exploring the excavations and watching the ingenious processes by which the metals were prepared for the use of man. The local colouring altogether belongs to Idumæa, the peninsula of Arabia, or to Egypt, certainly not to Palestine.

1. *a vein*] Or, as in the margin, "a mine." The original word means "an issue," or, "place where anything comes out." Silver stands first, probably because, at the time when the Book was written, it was very scarce and precious, and used more generally for exchange. This indicates extreme antiquity.

fine it] Two processes of fining were known to the ancients; one by washing, practised in Egypt, a second by smelting: the Hebrew has a technical term for each; the word here used denotes the former process.

2. *brass is molten out of the stone*] Or, and stone (ore) is molten to copper. Job is speaking of processes whereby iron and copper are extracted by fusion from ore found on the surface.

3. The miner's work is now described. "He setteth an end to darkness" (*i.e.* lets in light by opening a shaft, or by the lantern which he bears with him), "and to all perfection" (*i.e.* with the utmost completeness) he explores the stone of darkness and dense blackness," curiously exploring every stone for indications of metal.

4. Or, He (the miner) sinks a shaft away from the neighbourhood of settlers; unaided by the foot they hang swinging to and fro far from men; the latter clause describing the miner hanging on the rope and

unable to use his feet. Some take the words to mean, "forgotten by the feet of wayfarers, afar from the haunts of men."

5. Man tills the surface for food, and, not satisfied with that, penetrates its interior, and turns it up as by the action of subterranean fire. He alludes probably to the blasting of rocks in mines, which was practised on a large scale by the ancients (see r. 9 note).

6. *and it hath dust of gold*] Or, and dust of gold is for him, the miner. The great riches, which reward the toils and talents of the miners, are contrasted with the empty results of speculation about the hidden things of God's government.

7. *There is a path &c.*] Or, A path which the eagle knoweth not, and the eye of the vulture hath not espied it.

8. *The lion's whelps*] Or, "the fierce beasts," *lit.*, "the sons of pride or fierceness." The mine is a path which none but man could discern. His ingenuity is contrasted with the keen vision of the eagle and hawk, the strength and force of the lion; and his faculties are found far more wonderful and admirable.

9. *the rock*] "Granite" or "quartz." The expression, "putteth forth his hand," denotes the severe and continued exertions required to penetrate the rock.

overturneth] *i.e.* by fire or blasting.

10. *rivers*] Or, channels, to drain the mine, a process familiar to the Egyptians from the earliest times. The word is Egyptian; in the singular it is specially used of the Nile; but in the plural, as here, it means canals.

every precious thing] Laid bare by the receding waters.

- 11 He bindeth the floods ¹from overflowing;
And *the thing that is hid* bringeth he forth to light.
- ^a ver. 20. 12 ^aBut where shall wisdom be found?
Eccles. 7. 24. And where *is* the place of understanding?
- ^b Prov. 3. 15. 13 Man knoweth not the ^bprice thereof;
Neither is it found in the land of the living.
- ^c ver. 22. 14 ^cThe depth saith, *It is* not in me:
Rom. 11. 33, 34. And the sea saith, *It is* not with me.
- ^d Prov. 3. 13, 14, 15. 15 ^dIt ^dcannot be gotten for gold,
& 8. 10, 11, 19. Neither shall silver be weighed *for* the price thereof.
- & 16. 16. 16 It cannot be valued *with* the gold of Ophir,
With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.
- 17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it:
And the exchange of it *shall not be for* ³jewels of fine gold.
- 18 No mention shall be made of ⁴coral, or of pearls:
For the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.
- 19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,
Neither shall it be valued with pure gold.
- ^e ver. 12. 20 ^eWhence then cometh wisdom?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
- 21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,
And kept close from the fowls of the ⁵air.
- ^f ver. 14. 22 ^fDestruction and death say,
We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.
- 23 God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
- 24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
^g Prov. 15. 3. And ^gseeth under the whole heaven;

¹ Heb. *from weeping.**be given for it.*⁴ Or, *Ramoth.*² Heb. *Fine gold shall not*³ Or, *vessels of fine gold.*⁵ Or, *heaven.*

11. *overflowing*] The miner prevents the least leakage, or "weeping," a term still used in the same sense by working men in our collieries.

12. The contrast: the powers which have conquered nature do not advance man a single step in the search after the only substantial principle of existence. He cannot find "wisdom," the reason which deals with principles, or "understanding," the faculty which discerns and appreciates their application.

13. *price*] Man may traverse the habitable earth, explore the depths of the ocean, sail over all seas, possess all that the diver or the miner has collected and the merchant has transported from India to Ethiopia, but he acquires nothing which he can exchange for wisdom. The passion for jewels and precious stones has always been characteristic of the Semitic race. Hence, the careful, and evidently studied, enumeration of all that constituted the wealth of the merchant princes of the East.

16. *gold of Ophir*] It is impossible to say how soon Phœnician traffickers may have brought the thing and the name to western Asia. In an Egyptian inscription, referring

certainly to a period before Moses, distinct mention is made of precious stones, which chieftains of the Phœnicians had collected in their voyages. See xxiii. 24 note.

21. *from the fowls of the air*] The keenness of sight in birds of prey was regarded by all as a symbol, by some as an indication, of wisdom. Job had, probably, a special reason for naming the creatures in which his contemporaries saw depositaries of knowledge above that of man.

22. By a grand personification, Job summons "destruction" (Heb. "Abaddon," see xxvi. 6 note) and "death" to bear witness. Job perhaps felt that some dim intimation of the great truth reached the spirits of the departed even in their state of imperfect consciousness: or it may be that he simply means that the dead and the living are equally incapable of comprehending the wisdom of God.

23-27. God alone knows wisdom; it is not only His inherent endowment, but is manifested in the order of creation: it belongs to His omniscience, and is declared by His omnipotence. A portion of the eternal truth expressed by the word "Trinity" is here, so to speak, adumbrated. Wisdom is not

- 25 ^aTo make the weight for the winds;
And he weigheth the waters by measure.
- 26 When he ^amade a decree for the rain,
And a way for the lightning of the thunder:
- 27 Then did he see it, and ^adeclare it;
He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.
- 28 And unto man he said,
Behold, ^athe fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom;
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.
- CHAP. 29.** MOBE^aOVER Job ^acontinued his parable, and said,
2 Oh that I were ^aas in months past,
As in the days when God preserved me;
3 ^bWhen his ^acandle shined upon my head,
And when by his light I walked through darkness;
4 As I was in the days of my youth,
When ^cthe secret of God was upon my tabernacle;
5 When the Almighty was yet with me,
When my children were about me;
6 When ^dI washed my steps with butter,
And ^ethe rock poured ^eme out rivers of oil;
7 When I went out to the gate through the city,
When I prepared my seat in the street!
8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves:
And the aged arose, and stood up.
9 The princes refrained talking,
And ^flaid their hand on their mouth.
10 ^gThe nobles held their peace,
And their ^gtongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

^a Ps. 135. 7.

^c ch. 38. 25.

^a Deut. 4. 6.
Ps. 111. 10.
Prov. 1. 7.
& 9. 10.
Eccles. 12. 13.

^a See c. 1. 7. 3.

^b ch. 18. 6.

^c Ps. 25. 14.

^d Gen. 49. 11.
Deut. 32. 13.
& 33. 24.
ch. 20. 17.
^e Ps. 81. 16.

^f ch. 21. 5.

^g Ps. 137. 6.

¹ Or, number it.

² Heb. added to take up.

³ Or, lamp. Ps. 18. 28.

⁴ Heb. with me.

⁵ Heb. The voice of the nobles was hid.

actually personified; but we have a representation of it, one with, and yet distinct from its author; a representation which finds its true explanation in the doctrine of the Personal Word.

28. The wisdom of God consists in the absolute knowledge of all principles, causes, and effects in the universe; the wisdom of man, simply and wholly in unquestioning submission and obedience. Job's own character described as "one that eschewed evil" (i. 1), is described again here: "eschewed" and "depart from" being translations of one and the same word.

XXIX. In this chapter we have a description of the life of a great chieftain, no mere sheikh of a nomad tribe, but the prince of a state in which civilization had made considerable progress, and laws were administered with intelligence and care. The points which he enumerates are important for their bearing on the date of the work; they belong to an early age, and are entirely free from allusions to habits or institutions of later origin, and from aught that can remind us of Judah under the successors of David.

4. *youth*] Or, *manhood*; lit. "my harvest," i.e. the maturity of middle age, when Job was enjoying the fruits of earlier exertions.

the secret of God] **The counsel.** Or, Job means the full and uninterrupted communications of grace; when God made Himself known and felt as an ever-present counsellor and friend. Cp. xix. 19; Prov. iii. 32.

6. *butter*] **whay**, or curds; a common figure for overflowing abundance of the simple luxuries of pastoral life (cp. xx. 17).

7. Job resided in his own encampment, but at stated intervals went up to the neighbouring city to take his seat as chieftain and judge in the gate, where justice was administered (cp. v. 4 note).

through the city] Rather, **up to the city.** Job does not describe his passage through the city, but to the gate. Cities were generally built on heights.

in the street] Or, **broadway**; the word means the broad space within the city-gate, where causes were tried; corresponding to the forum.

8. *hid themselves*] As though unworthy to catch Job's eye.

10. *The nobles held their peace*] i.e. they were suddenly silenced by awe on the entrance of the great chief. The simple organization of the state here described is like that in the Homeric poems. It is aristocratic: the rank and influence of the chief

- 11 When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me ;
And when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me :
12 Because ^aI delivered the poor that cried,
And the fatherless, and *him that had none* to help him.
13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me :
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
14 ^cI put on righteousness, and it clothed me :
My judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.
15 I was ^beyes to the blind,—and feet *was* I to the lame.
16 I *was* a father to the poor :
And ^dthe cause *which* I knew not I searched out.
17 And I brake ^{m1}the jaws of the wicked,
And ²plucked the spoil out of his teeth.
18 Then I said, ^aI shall die in my nest,
And I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.
19 ^eMy root *was* ³spread out ^bby the waters,
And the dew lay all night upon my branch.
20 My glory *was* ⁴fresh in me,
And ^cmy bow *was* ⁵renewed in my hand.
21 Unto me *men* gave ear,
And waited, and kept silence at my counsel.
22 After my words they spake not again ;
And my speech dropped upon them.
23 And they waited for me as for the rain ;
And they opened their mouth wide *as* for ^rthe latter rain.
24 *If* I laughed on them, they believed *it* not ;
And the light of my countenance they cast not down.
25 I chose out their way, and sat chief,

¹ Heb. *the jaw-teeth*, or,
the grinders.

² Heb. *cast.*

³ Heb. *opened.*

⁴ Heb. *new.*

⁵ Heb. *changed.*

depend upon his personal character ; he sits as first among his equals.

11. When he entered as judge, all who feared oppression and had suffered wrong rejoiced.

14. This beautiful figure is common in Hebrew and in Arabic poetry. The robes of state worn on such occasions by judges and chieftains were thus regarded as a symbol or representation of the clothing of "righteousness." Job put on "righteousness ;" that was his free act, and it—in return—clung to him.

diadem] i.e. the turban of costly shawls wound round the head ; a primeval custom.

16. *which*] Or, of the man whom I knew not. Job sees a poor stranger, who has no claims upon him save those of common humanity, and he takes pains to inquire into his cause.

17. As chief Job enforces the sentence : he is advocate, judge, sheriff, and executioner ; a necessary and effective combination of offices in an imperfectly organized community.

18. *in* (rather, *with*) *my nest*] i.e. in full possession of house and family.

sand] A common figure for boundless extent. Later commentators generally assume

that the word in the original means "phoenix," the bird of legend, a type of immortality, which, after a secular period of existence, was consumed, together with its nest, in a pile of fragrant woods, lighted by fire from heaven, only to reappear with renovated youth and strength. But the common version gives a satisfactory sense, and very strong grounds should be produced before we admit the recognition of a legend. The word is not Egyptian.

19, 20. Render, *My root will be open to the waters ; and the dew will rest on my branches ; my honour will remain fresh with me, and my bow will be ever strong* (lit. "renewed," "ever young") *in my hand*. Job here speaks of his former hopes, not of his former estate.

22. *dropped*] The dropping of dew, showers, and the heavy rains of spring, are common figures for eloquence, especially in Oriental poetry (cp. Deut. xxxii. 2).

24. *they believed it not*] As though it was too great a condescension to be realized.

they cast not down] They never attempted to oppose my views, and thus bring a shade of displeasure over my countenance.

25. *I chose out their way*] As a leader of the course of any tribal expedition.

And dwelt as a king in the army,
As one *that* comforteth the mourners.

CHAP. 30. BUT now *they that are* ¹younger than I have me in derision,

Whose fathers I would have disdained
To have set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto *might* the strength of their hands *profit* me,
In whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine *they were* ²solitary;
Fleeing into the wilderness

³In former time desolate and waste.

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes,
And juniper roots *for* their meat.

5 They were driven forth from among men,
(They cried after them as *after* a thief;)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys,
In ⁴caves of the earth, and *in* the rocks.

7 Among the bushes they brayed;
Under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 *They were* children of fools, yea, children of ⁵base men:
They were viler than the earth.

9 ^aAnd now am I their song,—yea, I am their byword.

10 They ^babhor me, they flee far from me,
^cAnd spare not ^bto spit in my face.

11 Because he ^chath loosed my cord, and afflicted me,
They have also let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon *my right hand* rise the youth;
They push away my feet,

¹ Heb. *of fewer days than I.*

² Or, *dark as the night.*

³ Heb. *yesternight.*

⁴ Heb. *holes.*

⁵ Heb. *men of no name.*

⁶ Heb. *and withhold not
spittle from my face*

^a ch. 17. 6.

Ps. 35. 15.

& 69. 12.

Lam. 3. 14,

63.

^b Num. 12.

14.

Deut. 25. 9.

Isai. 50. 6.

Matt. 26. 67.

& 27. 30.

^c See ch. 12.

18.

XXX. Job's last bitter outcry. Afflictions reach him on all sides, from without (*vv.* 1-14), and from within (*vv.* 15-19). The greatest of all miseries being, that God is cruel to him (*vv.* 20-22).

1-10. A description of the outcast hordes of the desert (*cp.* xxiv. 5, 6); and specially of a horde driven from their homes by a stronger race. There is reason to suppose that in Idumæa and Bashan Troglodytes (*v.* 6), a weak nerveless race, survived their ruin for some considerable time, lingering near their old abodes in hopeless degradation. The colouring belongs to the age and country of Job; the description is that of a wretchedness unknown or unrecorded in Palestine.

1. *whose fathers*] The wretched outcasts, unfit for the very meanest offices.

2. *old age*] Rather, "full age" (as in *v.* 26), the maturity of age, or *vigour*. Job describes wretches who have no stamina, weak, nerveless, destined to early decay and premature death.

3. *solitary*] The word in the original denotes "barrenness," the utter absence of vital force, limbs stiffened and cramped by long famine.

fleeing into] Lit., "gnawing the wilderness."

ness," having, so to speak, for food, the dust of the waste and desolate desert. The word, which is peculiar to Job, has this sense in Arabic.

in former time] See *marg.* rendering, which may give the sense, "the yesterday of waste and desolation," *i.e.* places which had been hitherto utterly desolate.

4. The mallow was a salt herb, affording scanty nourishment to the dwellers in the desert. It is a species of shrub common in the desert of Syria, and about 1½ feet high.

6. *cares*] Better as in the *marg.* holes. Hordes of Troglodytes (cave-dwellers) lived in the districts adjoining the Hauran.

7. *gathered together*] Or, *huddled up in heaps*.

8. *viler than the earth*] Rather, *they are driven (or scourged) out of the land, i.e.* the cultivated districts.

11. All Job's calamities were a result of God's anger, "Who loosed Job's cord," *i.e.* the life power which holds together the bodily frame; hence they who insulted him also "let loose the bridle," *i.e.* cast off all restraint of reverence or fear.

12. *the youth*] Or, *the brood*; the base crowd of his persecutors.

ways of their destruction] They proceed

- ^d ch. 19. 12. And ^dthey raise up against me the ways of their destruction.
 13 They mar my path,—they set forward my calamity,
 They have no helper.
 14 They came *upon me* as a wide breaking in of waters :
 In the desolation they rolled themselves *upon me*.
 15 Terrors are turned upon me :
 They pursue ¹ my soul as the wind :
 And my welfare passeth away as a cloud.
^c Ps. 42. 4. 16 ^cAnd now my soul is poured out upon me ;
 The days of affliction have taken hold upon me.
 17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season :
 And my sinews take no rest.
 18 By the great force of *my disease* is my garment changed :
 It bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.
 19 He hath cast me into the mire,
 And I am become like dust and ashes.
 20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me :
 I stand up, and thou regardest me *not*.
 21 Thou art ² become cruel to me :
 With ³thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.
 22 Thou liftest me up to the wind ;
 Thou causest me to ride *upon it*,
 And dissolvest my ⁴ substance.
^f Heb. 9. 27. 23 For I know *that* thou wilt bring me to death,
 And to the house ^fappointed for all living.
 24 Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the ⁵grave, •
 Though they cry in his destruction.
^g Ps. 35. 13, 14. 25 ^gDid not I weep ⁶for him that was in trouble ?
 Was *not* my soul grieved for the poor ?
^h Rom. 12. 15. 26 ^hWhen I looked for good, then evil came *unto me* :
ⁱ Jer. 8. 15. And when I waited for light, there came darkness.
 27 My bowels boiled, and rested not :
¹ Heb. *my principal one*.
² Heb. *turned to be cruel*.
³ Heb. *the strength of thy hand*.
⁴ Or, *wisdom*.
⁵ Heb. *heap*.
⁶ Heb. *for him that was hard of day?*

like an invading army, making for itself a road through the wilderness.

13. *they have no helper*] Job is insulted even by those who themselves are without kith or kin, lonely wretches. Some read “and there is none to help me.”

15. *my soul*] Lit., “my dignity ;” *i.e.* me once the noblest among the noble.

17. *pierced*] The leprosy eats away the flesh and nerves, and then corrodes the bones, so that the limbs fall off piecemeal.

my sinews] Rather, *my gnawing pains* (cp. v. 3 note).

18. The very garment which Job wears is changed by his disease in form and appearance. It sticks fast to his broken skin.

collar of my coat] Lit., “the mouth of my tunic,” *i.e.* the aperture for the neck (cp. Ex. xxviii. 31 note). Job feels almost strangled by the cloak which cleaves to his diseased body.

20. Omit “*not*.” Job represents the Almighty as looking on pitiless, when he stands holding out his hands in prayer.

21. Or, “Thou art *changed*, and become cruel to me.” Job feels above all things the change in his relations to God, once his friend, now to all appearance his enemy.

22. *causest me to ride upon it*] An expression equivalent to “borne away by the wind” (cp. xxvii. 21).

23. Job thus retains the conviction which he has all along expressed, that his sufferings will only end with death.

24. A very obscure verse: perhaps the best rendering is:—*Howbeit will not a man in his ruinous fall stretch out his hand? In his calamity will he not complain thereof?* In v. 25 Job appeals to his own conduct, when others had thus stretched out their hands, and cried out for help.

26. This may refer to his feelings when affliction first came; prayer he then believed would bring back “good,” *i.e.* prosperity and light.

27–29. These verses describe the intense agony of Job’s supplications.

27. *My bowels*] Or, “entrails ;” with the

The days of affliction prevented me.

- 28 'I went mourning without the sun :
I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.
29 'I am a brother to dragons,—and a companion to 'owls.
30 'My skin is black upon me,
And "my bones are burned with heat.
31 My harp also is turned to mourning,
And my organ into the voice of them that weep.

- CHAP. 31. I MADE a covenant with mine "eyes ;
Why then should I think upon a maid ?
2 For what ^bportion of God is there from above ?
And what inheritance of the Almighty from on high ?
3 Is not destruction to the wicked ?
And a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity ?
4 'Doth not he see my ways,—and count all my steps ?
5 If I have walked with vanity,
Or if my foot hath hastened to deceit ;
6 'Let me be weighed in an even balance,
That God may know mine integrity.
7 If my step hath turned out of the way,
And ^dmine heart walked after mine eyes,
And if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands ;
8 Then 'let me sow, and let another eat ;
Yea, let my offspring be rooted out.
9 If mine heart have been deceived by a woman,
Or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door ;
10 Then let my wife grind unto 'another,

¹ Or, ostriches.

² Hob. Let him weigh me in balances of justice.

^a Ps. 38. 6.
& 42. 9.
& 43. 2.
^b Ps. 102. 6.
Mic. 1. 8.
^c Ps. 119. 83.
Lam. 4. 8.
& 5. 10.
^d Ps. 102. 3.

^a Matt. 5. 28.

^b ch. 20. 29.
& 27. 13.

^c 2 Chr. 16. 9.
ch. 34. 21.
Prov. 5. 21.
& 15. 3.
Jer. 32. 19.

^d See Num.
15. 39.
Eccles. 11. 9.
Ezek. 6. 9.
Matt. 5. 29.
^e Lev. 26. 16.
Deut. 28.
30, 38, &c.
^f 2 Sam. 12.
11.
Jer. 8. 10.

Hebrews the seat of all deep inward yearnings (see xxxii. 19 note).

prevented me] i.e. came upon me suddenly and unexpectedly. Cp. Ps. xviii. 5.

28 without the sun] Or, I go about blackened (but) not with the sun. The blackness of which Job speaks, is produced by disease, not by the heat of the sun.

in the congregation] i.e. in public. This is the last proof how utterly his nature was broken down. At first, Job could speak words of resignation; next, he could at least subdue all expression of anguish; but at last, after seven days' silence, he cried aloud before men.

29. dragons] Or, jackals. The cry of the jackal and of the ostrich is described as inexpressibly mournful and piercing.

30. upon me] Or, from me; i.e. it falls from me in blackened shreds.

31. organ] Or, pipe (see xxi. 12 note).

XXXI. Job concludes the whole series of discourses with a solemn protestation of his integrity in all relative duties. The points which he selects belong altogether to natural religion, or rather to religion as it was understood and practised by the Patriarchs, without a single reference or allusion to the specific institutions of Israel. Some of the verses (e.g. vv. 6, 13, 35; see notes) contain several points of resemblance with

the 125th chapter of the Egyptian Ritual, or "Book of the dead," in which the departed spirit undergoes an examination before the 42 assessors of Osiris.

1. with] Rather "to," i.e. Job prescribed a law to his eyes. Of all the senses Job singles out the finest, that through which the approaches of sensuality are most subtle and dangerous.

why then] Or, "how then," how was it possible that my thoughts should wander?

2. is there] Better, "would be." Job asks; "For what would be my portion in case of my giving way to secret lust?"

5. vanity] i.e., inconsistency between practice and profession.

6. Let me be weighed &c.] Or, Let Him weigh me in a balance of righteousness: the reference is to the day of final account. In the Egyptian Ritual the balance forms an essential part of the judgment of Osiris.

that God may know] Rather, and God will know my integrity. Searching inquiry must issue in Job's vindication.

7. after mine eyes] This refers to v. 1.

8. offspring] Rather, plants or "produce."
9. Render, if my heart hath been befooled for a woman. For the next clause cp. xxiv. 15; Prov. vii. 7.

10. grind unto another] Be reduced to

And let others bow down upon her.

11 For this *is* an heinous crime;

Yea, *it is* an iniquity *to be punished by* the judges,

12 For it *is* a fire *that* consumeth to destruction,

And would root out all mine increase.

13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant

Or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

14 What then shall I do when ^bGod riseth up?

And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

15 ^cDid not he that made me in the womb make him?

And ^ddid not one fashion us in the womb?

16 If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire,

Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone,

And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with a* father,

And I have guided ^eher from my mother's womb;)

19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,

Or any poor without covering;

20 If his loins have not ^fbeen blessed me,

And *if* he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

21 If I have lifted up my hand ^gagainst the fatherless,

When I saw my help in the gate:

22 Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade,

And mine arm be broken from ^hthe bone.

23 For ⁱdestruction *from* God *was* a terror to me,

And by reason of his highness I could not endure.

24 ^jIf I have made gold my hope,

Or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;

25 ^kIf I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great,

And because mine hand had ^lgotten much;

26 ^mIf I beheld ⁿthe sun when it shined,

Or the moon walking ^oin brightness;

¹ Or, *did he not fashion us*

in one womb?

² That is, *the widow.*

³ Or, *the chancelbone.*

⁴ Heb. *found much.*

⁵ Heb. *the light.*

⁶ Heb. *bright.*

slavery; grinding is the work assigned in the East to the lowest slaves, and more especially to women. Job refers probably in both clauses of this verse to the yet deeper degradation of the unhappy captive.

12. *destruction*] Heb. "Abaddon:" i.e. hell (see xxvi. 6 note).

13. *despise the cause*] A statement which proves that slaves had legal rights recognized by men of integrity. Thus, in the Egyptian Ritual, calumniating a slave is connected with injuring the gods.

14. *when God riseth up*] i.e. in judgment.

18. *he...her*] i.e. the fatherless and the widow.

21. *my help in the gate*] Friends and supporters in the court of justice (see xxix. 7).

22. *As a punishment for abuse of power and influence.* See xxx. 17 note.

23. Job means, "I could not possibly

have committed this sin, for the destruction inflicted by God is dreaded by me as a just and sure retribution, and before His Majesty I should be incapable of committing sin." Others explain it, "for terror would have come upon me, and destruction from God justly, nor could I have borne up against His highness."

24. See ii. 11 note on the name Eli-phaz.

26. *the sun*] Job notices no other form of idolatry. The only fault, which he does conceive as possible, is that he may have been secretly moved by the glory of the two great lights to see in them deities, or visible representation of the Deity. Kissing the hand as a token of admiration and worship was an early and common practice in Syria. The cult of the stars, and more especially of the two great lights, belongs to the very

- 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed,
Or my mouth hath kissed my hand :
- 28 This also *were* ^{an} iniquity *to be punished by the judge :*
For I should have denied the God *that is* above. 9 ver. 11.
- 29 ¹ If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,
Or lifted up myself when evil found him :
- 30 ² Neither have I suffered ³ my mouth to sin
By wishing a curse to his soul. 9 Prov. 17. 5.
- 31 If the men of my tabernacle said not,
Oh that we had of his flesh ! we cannot be satisfied.
- 32 ⁴ The stranger did not lodge in the street,
But I opened my doors ⁵ to the traveller. 9 Gen. 19. 2, 3.
Judg. 19. 20,
21.
- 33 If I covered my transgressions ⁶ as Adam,
By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom :
- 34 Did I fear a great ⁷ multitude,
Or did the contempt of families terrify me,
That I kept silence, *and* went not out of the door ? 9 Rom. 12. 14.
Matt. 5. 44.
- 35 ⁸ Oh that one would hear me !
⁹ Behold, my desire *is*, ¹⁰ that the Almighty would answer me,
And *that* mine adversary had written a book. 9 Gen. 3. 8, 12.
Prov. 28. 13.
Hos. 6. 7.
Ex. 23. 2.
ch. 33. 6.
ch. 13. 22.
- 36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder,
And bind it as a crown to me.

¹ Heb. *my hand hath kissed my mouth.*

² Heb. *my palate.*

³ Or, *to the way.*

⁴ Or, *after the manner of men.*

⁵ Or, *behold, my sign is that the Almighty will answer me.*

oldest superstitions in the world. It is anterior even to the very oldest of the Vedas, and common in Egypt from the earliest times. On the Israelitish cult see 2 K. xvii. 16 note.

28. *to be punished &c.*] Star-worship was therefore legally punishable. This might be expected among the descendants of Abraham and in the community to which Job belonged, in which the principle of monotheism was undoubtedly retained.

denied] Such idolatry is practical atheism.

29. A remarkable superiority of moral character. Job does not say, "of him whom I hated," but "of him who hated me," as though hate could not find place in his own heart (cp. Matt. v. 23 &c.).

30. *by wishing a curse &c.*] Or, *by demanding his life with a curse* or imprecation.

31. This *verse* may be rendered, *If the men of my tent could not say, "who can point out one not satisfied with his meat?"* i.e. show us one person who has not been liberally entertained by Job.

32. Between this verse and v. 33, many insert vv. 38-40, as being closely connected with the previous passage, and following naturally in the train of thought.

33, 34. Translate :

"If I had concealed my sin like Adam,
Hiding mine iniquity in my bosom,
Because I dreaded the great assembly,
Or (because) the contempt of the families
(of my tribe) intimidated me,

Then had I been silent, nor had I gone out of my door."

In the latter verse Job probably means that, had he been conscious of sin unconfessed and unrepented, he would have lived in constant dread of exposure; he would have remained a prisoner in his tent, not as now challenging inquiry, and deliberately proclaiming the justice of his cause.

35, 36. Render : *O that I had one who would hear me ! Lo, here is my signature ! May the Almighty answer me ! O that I had the book which my adversary had written ; surely I would take it on my shoulder, and bind it as diadems upon me.*

Two documents would be required in a full and formal investigation : the accuser's statement, drawn out previously and read in open court, and the answer of the accused with his signature : the former Job declares he would, far from dreading conviction, take and lay on his shoulders, as a badge of honour (see Isai. ix. 6, xxii. 22), or bear as a crown upon his head. In the well-known representation of the judgment before Osiris, Thoth, the accuser or advocate, stands before the throne with a scroll in his left hand, and the recording pen in his right : the person on trial stands behind, holding up his hand in attestation of innocence. Egyptian monuments thus prove that the presentation of written documents in courts of justice belongs to earlier ages than that ascribed to Job.

37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps;
As a prince would I go near unto him.

38 If my land cry against me,

Or that the furrows likewise thereof ¹complain;

^a Jam. 5. 4.

39 If ^aI have eaten ²the fruits thereof without money,

^b 1 Kin. 21.

Or ^bhave ³caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

¹⁹.

^c Gen. 3. 18.

40 Let ^cthistles grow instead of wheat,

And ^dcockle instead of barley.

The words of Job are ended.

CHAP. 32. SO these three men ceased ^eto answer Job, because he ^{was} ^arighteous in his own eyes.

^a ch. 33. 9.

^b Gen. 22. 21.

2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel ^bthe

Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath

3 kindled, because he justified ⁶himself rather than God. Also

against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they

4 had found no answer, and ^{yet} had condemned Job. Now Elihu

had ⁷waited till Job had spoken, because they ^{were} ^{elder} than

5 he. When Elihu saw that ^{there was} no answer in the mouth of

6 ^{these} three men, then his wrath was kindled. And Elihu the

son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said,

^c ch. 15. 10.

I ^{am} ^{young}, ^{and ye} ^{are} ^{very} ^{old};

Wherefore I was afraid, and ¹durst not shew you mine opinion.

7 I said, Days should speak,

And multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8 But ^{there is} a spirit in man:

¹ Heb. weep.

² Heb. the strength thereof.

³ Heb. caused the soul of the owners thereof to ex-

pire, or, breathe out.

⁴ Or, noisome weeds.

⁵ Heb. from answering.

⁶ Heb. his soul.

⁷ Heb. expected Job in words.

⁸ Heb. elder for days.

⁹ Heb. few of days.

¹ Heb. feared.

37. unto him] Unto God.
the number of my steps] i.e. every act in the course of my life.

near unto him] Nearness to God is the crown of all. This appears, beyond all doubt, to be the close of Job's speech; it brings all that has been said to an absolute conclusion—every possible charge has been disposed of: Job's integrity stands clear, and he presents himself before God for judgment.

38. See last note and v. 32 note.

If my land cry out against me] i.e. if a single furrow of it has been acquired by injustice.

39. without money] i.e. without a full right acquired by purchase.

to lose their life] A ruthless oppressor, as Job had been assumed to be, would clear his lands by the extermination of their former owners.

XXXII.—XXXVII. These chapters contain the discourse of Elihu (see Introd. p. 4). As matters stood, the opponents of Job had broken the law of charity, Job had trenchanted upon the reverence due to God: one point being common to both, to look upon his afflictions as indications and results of God's wrath. Elihu has a different theory to propose: the divine chastisements have a loving purpose. From this general principle Elihu proceeds (ch. xxxiv)

to prove that it is impossible that God the supreme Almighty Ruler should be unjust, and that such imputations as those which Job had advanced involve very serious guilt. Job's only right course is to listen to God's teaching, and to magnify His work.

2. The name Elihu means "He is my God;" his father's name Barachel means "God blesseth," or "bless, O God:" both names are significant, and they prove that the speaker belonged to a family which had retained the knowledge of the God of heaven and earth.

the Buzite] Buz and Uz were the two sons of Nahor, Abraham's brother. The name Ram is probably connected with Aram. The language of Elihu is more strongly marked by Aramaic forms than any other part of the book, a fact which harmonizes with this notice of his origin.

4. waited &c.] Or, awaited Job with words which he had impatiently wished to utter.

6. shew you mine opinion] Or, utter what I know in your presence. Elihu does not speak of his opinion, but of what he knows, an inward conviction which it is his duty to utter.

8. Or, Truly it is the Spirit in man, and the breath of God which giveth him (i.e. man collectively) understanding. The inward impulse comes direct from God.

- And ^athe inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.
- 9 ^aGreat men are not *always* wise:
Neither do the aged understand judgment.
- 10 Therefore I said, Harken to me;—I also will shew mine opinion.
- 11 Behold, I waited for your words;—I gave ear to your ¹reasons, Whilst ye searched out ²what to say.
- 12 Yea, I attended unto you,
And, behold, *there was* none of you that convinced Job,
Or that answered his words:
- 13 ³Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom:
God thrusteth him down, not man.
- 14 Now he hath not ³directed *his* words against me:
Neither will I answer him with your speeches.
- 15 They were amazed, they answered no more:
⁴They left off speaking.
- 16 When I had waited, (for they spake not,
But stood still, *and* answered no more;)
- 17 *I said*, I will answer also my part,—I also will shew mine opinion.
- 18 For I am full of ⁵matter,
⁶The spirit within me constraineth me.
- 19 Behold, my belly *is* as wine *which* ⁷hath no vent;
It is ready to burst like new bottles.
- 20 I *will* speak, ⁸that I may be refreshed:
I will open my lips and answer.
- 21 Let me not, I pray you, ⁹accept any man's person,
Neither let me give flattering titles unto man.
- 22 For I know not to give flattering titles;
In so doing my maker would soon take me away.
- CHAP. 33. WHEREFORE,** Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches,
And hearken to all my words.
- 2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth,
My tongue hath spoken ⁹in my mouth.
- 3 My words *shall be* of the uprightness of my heart:
And my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.
- 4 ^aThe spirit of God hath made me,
- ¹ Heb. *understandings*. *from themselves.* ⁷ Heb. *is not opened.*
² Heb. *words.* ⁵ Heb. *words.* ⁸ Heb. *that I may breathe.*
³ Or, *ordered his words.* ⁶ Heb. *the spirit of my* ⁹ Heb. *in my palate.*
⁴ Heb. *they removed speeches* *belly.*

^a 1 Kin. 3. 12.
& 4. 29.
ch. 35. 11.
& 38. 36.
Prov. 2. 6.
Eccles. 2. 26.
Dan. 1. 17.
& 2. 21.
Matt. 11. 25.
Jam. 1. 5.
¹ 1 Cor. 1. 26.

¹ Jer. 9. 23.
1 Cor. 1. 29.

⁹ Lev. 19. 15.
Deut. 1. 17.
& 16. 19.
Prov. 24. 23.
Matt. 22. 16.

^a Gen. 2. 7.

13. This verse probably means, "You must not then say we have found wisdom, since we proved his guilt by the simple fact that God punishes him."

18. *matter*] Or, *words*: the genuine and irrepressible convictions (cp. Ps. xxxix. 3, 4).

19. In Hebrew physiology the heart is regarded as the seat of intelligence, the entrails or bowels, of yearnings, the belly of spiritual emotions. The word rendered "belly" means simply "the inward part." For the illustrations cp. Matt. ix. 17; Acts ii. 13.

20. *refreshed*] Or, as in the margin, *breathe*. Elihu is well nigh suffocated: a feeling known to all who have listened to partial or false defences of truth.

21. Continued silence would imply a deference to mere human authority, a meanness and subserviency which God would punish.

XXXIII. 2. *opened my mouth*] See iii. 1 note.

in my mouth] Or, *palate*; i.e. each word is as it were tasted, carefully examined, and approved before it is uttered by the tongue. This is the first reason why Job should hearken.

3. Two additional reasons, honesty of intention, and simple straightforward earnestness of language. The latter clause should be rendered, *my lips shall speak out what I know with sincerity*.

4. The chief reason of all. The Spirit, the breath of the Almighty, now quickeneth

And the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

5 If thou canst answer me,

Set *thy words* in order before me, stand up.

^b ch. 9. 34,
35.
& 13. 20, 21.
& 31. 35.
^c ch. 9. 34.
& 13. 21.

6 ^bBehold, I am ¹according to thy wish in God's stead :

I also am ²formed out of the clay.

7 ^cBehold, my terror shall not make thee afraid,

Neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

8 Surely thou hast spoken ³in mine hearing,

And I have heard the voice of *thy words*, saying,

^d ch. 9. 17.
& 10. 7.
& 11. 4.
& 16. 17.
& 23. 10, 11.
& 27. 5.
& 29. 14.
& 31. 1.
^e ch. 13. 24.
& 16. 9.
& 19. 11.
^f ch. 13. 27.
& 14. 16.
& 31. 4.
^g Isai. 45. 9.
^h ch. 40. 5.
Ps. 62. 11.
ⁱ Num. 12. 6.
ch. 4. 13.
^k ch. 36. 10,
15.

9 ^dI am clean without transgression, I am innocent;

Neither is *there* iniquity in me.

10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me,

^eHe counteth me for his enemy,

11 ^fHe putteth my feet in the stocks,—he marketh all my paths.

12 Behold, in this thou art not just:

I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

13 Why dost thou ^gstrive against him?

For ^hhe giveth not account of any of his matters.

14 ⁱFor God speaketh once,—yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

15 ^jIn a dream, in a vision of the night,

When deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

16 ^kThen ^lhe openeth the ears of men,—and scaleth their instruction,

17 That he may withdraw man from his ^mpurpose,

And hide pride from man.

18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit,

And his life from perishing by the sword.

19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,

And the multitude of his bones with strong pain :

^l Ps. 107. 18. 20 ⁿSo that his life abhorreth bread,—and his soul ^odainty meat.

21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen ;

And his bones that were not seen stick out.

¹ Heb. according to thy mouth.

² Heb. cut out of the clay.

³ Heb. in mine ears.

⁴ Heb. he answereth not.

⁵ Heb. he revealeth, or, uncovereth.

⁶ Heb. work.

⁷ Heb. from passing by the sword.

⁸ Heb. meat of desire.

Elihu, *i.e.* gives such life and power to his conviction that he is constrained to speak.

6, 7. An allusion to Job's oft-repeated wish (see marg. reff.). The first verse may be more accurately rendered, Behold I, like thee, am God's creature, I also am moulded of clay.

7. *my hand*] Or, "my burden." The word in Arabic means a heavy load, and metaphorically "oppression."

9-11. Elihu is justified in these statements (see marg. reff.); but he does little justice to Job's inward conviction and frequent declarations, that he is conscious of natural sinfulness and many transgressions.

12. *that God is greater than man*] Some render: "for God is too great to be questioned by man."

13. *strive*] *i.e.* as an adversary in a court of justice.

The meaning of the next words appears to be, "God is not bound to give any account to man, and yet He gives clear intimations to those who attend to them."

16. God opens or uncovers their ears, *i.e.* opens their minds to spiritual truth. He scaleth their instruction or chastisement, *i.e.* makes the man feel from Whom and for what purpose chastisement is sent.

17. God's object is one of love, not of wrath. The chastisement is intended to make a man give up some wrong purpose, and to put away all pride.

19-22. The case of one suffering like Job himself; here also God's object is a loving one.

19. *and the multitude of his bones*] Some render: "and with continuous struggles" *i.e.* anguish of his bones.

21. *that it cannot be seen*] Or, "out of sight:" so that none can bear to look at it. *and his bones &c.*] *i.e.* "his bones are

- 22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave,
And his life to the destroyers.
- 23 If there be a messenger with him,
An interpreter, one among a thousand,
To shew unto man his uprightness :
- 24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
Deliver him from going down to the pit :
I have found ¹a ransom.
- 25 His flesh shall be fresher ²than a child's :
He shall return to the days of his youth :
- 26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him :
And he shall see his face with joy :
For he will render unto man his righteousness.
- 27 ³He looketh upon men, and if any ^msay,
I have sinned, and perverted *that which was right*,
And it ⁿprofited me not ;
- 28 ⁴He will ^odeliver his soul from going into the pit,
And his life shall see the light.
- 29 Lo, all these *things* worketh God—⁵oftentimes with man,
- 30 ^pTo bring back his soul from the pit,
To be enlightened with the light of the living.
- 31 Mark ^qwell, O Job, hearken unto me :
Hold thy peace, and I will speak.
- 32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me :
Speak, for I desire to justify thee.
- 33 If not, ^rhearken unto me :
Hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

^m 2 Sam. 12.
13.
Prov. 28. 13.
Luke 15. 21.
1 John 1. 9.
ⁿ Rom. 6. 21.
^o Isai. 38. 17.

^p ver. 28.
Ps. 50. 13.

^q Ps. 34. 11.

¹ Or, an atonement.

² Heb. than childhood.

³ Or, He shall look upon

men, and say, I have
sinned, &c.

⁴ Or, He hath delivered my
soul, &c., and my life.

⁵ Heb. twice and thrice.

bared to the sight." An older reading is
"and his bones waste away and disappear."

22. *the destroyers*] i.e. death and his attendants and precursors, the pangs preceding dissolution. Many commentators suppose that Elihu speaks of "destroying" Angels (see 2 S. xxiv. 16, 17; Ps. lxxviii. 49).

23. *messenger*] All the old Versions have "Angel." The office of the Angels is to execute God's purposes, and they are sent forth to minister to His people (Heb. ii. 14).

an interpreter] The word expresses the office of the Angel as one who makes known the will of his superior (cp. Gen. xlii. 23). The Jewish prayers shew that the Interpreter was expected identified in their minds with the expected Redeemer of Israel.

one among a thousand] i.e. one who among a thousand (i.e. an indefinite number, the whole body of Angels) has no equal (cp. Song of S. v. 10). Holy Scripture knows but one such divine Mediator.

to show unto man his uprightness] i.e. the right way by which he may be delivered from sin and death, the way of repentance and faith.

24. Rather; then *He*, God, is gracious, and he, the Angel, saith.

a ransom] Lit. that which covers sin, and

saves the sinner from its penalty: hence a ransom or atonement. Elihu evidently speaks of a propitiatory offering; in whatever form that may be provided, he is sure that when the great Angel intervenes the reconciliation must be effected. We have a true, though an undeveloped, anticipation of the truth afterwards revealed.

25. Cp. 2 K. v. 14. Elihu speaks of restoration to perfect health; but his words are suggestive of higher truths made known to us by the true Mediator.

26. The prayer that is offered by man after his restoration to God's favour. God will again regard and treat him as a righteous man.

27, 28. Render: He (the penitent) will sing unto men, and say, I had sinned and perverted that which was right, and it was not required to me. He redeemed my soul from passing into the pit, (cp. 18, 24), and my life beholdeth the light with joy.

29, 30. One object of divine dispensations is thus stated with equal truth and beauty. It does not reach Job's case exactly; but it is full of comfort and support to all in affliction.

29. oftentimes] See marg. rendering, and cp. v. 14.

CHAP. 34. FURTHERMORE Elihu answered and said,

2 Hear my words, O ye wise *men* ;

And give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

^a ch. 6. 30. & 12. 11. 3 ^a For the ear trieth words,—as the ¹mouth tasteth meat.

4 Let us choose to us judgment :

Let us know among ourselves what *is* good.

^b ch. 33. 9. 5 For Job hath said, ^b I am righteous :

And ^c God hath taken away my judgment.

^c ch. 9. 17. 6 ^a Should I lie against my right ?

² My wound *is* incurable without transgression.

^e ch. 15. 16. 7 What man *is* like Job,—^e *who* drinketh up scorning like water ?

8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walketh with wicked men.

^f ch. 9. 22. 9 For ^f he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing
That he should delight himself with God.

23. 30.
& 35. 3.

Mal. 3. 14.

10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye ³ men of understanding :

^o Far be it from God, *that he should do* wickedness ;

And from the Almighty, *that he should commit* iniquity.

² Chr. 19. 7. 11 ^h For the work of a man shall he render unto him,

And cause every man to find according to *his* ways.

¹ Gen. 13. 25. 12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly,

Neither will the Almighty ¹ pervert judgment.

^h Ps. 62. 12. 13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth ?

² Prov. 21. 12. Or who hath disposed ⁴ the whole world ?

³ Jer. 32. 19. 14 If he set his heart ⁵ upon man,

⁴ Rom. 2. 6. If he ^k gather unto himself his spirit and his breath ;

² Cor. 5. 10. 15 ^l All flesh shall perish together,

And man shall turn again unto dust.

¹ Pet. 1. 17. ¹ ch. 8. 3.

^k Ps. 104. 29. 16 If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this :

^l Gen. 3. 19. Hearken to the voice of my words.

^m Eccles. 12. 7. 17 ^m Shall even he that hateth right ⁶ govern ?

ⁿ Gen. 18. 25. And wilt thou condemn him that *is* most just ?

² Sam. 23. 3.

¹ Heb. *palate*.

² Heb. *mine arrow*, ch. 6.

4. & 16. 13.

³ Heb. *men of heart*.

⁴ Heb. *all of it* ?

⁵ Heb. *upon him*.

⁶ Heb. *bind* ?

XXXIV. 6. *without transgression*] *i.e.* "although he had committed no transgression." Upon the theory of Elihu this position implied pride or perversity in the sufferer (see xxxiii. 17, 27).

7. Elihu goes now far beyond the truth. Job's scorn was directed against his friends, not against God.

8. *goeth in company*] *i.e.* adopts their principles and arguments.

9. Elihu does scanty justice to Job, who repeatedly asserts that such facts are matters of perplexity, not that they really represent the principles of the divine government (cp. xxiv. 1, xxvii. 11).

13-16. The first proof that the Almighty is just in all his dealings (vv. 10-12), is the absoluteness of God's government. "Who hath given Him a charge?" The inference to be drawn is that God administers the government out of His own free will.

14. The word "man" is not in the Hebrew (see marg.); and the most probable

meaning is, "If God set His heart upon Himself (*i.e.* regarded Himself only, were not full of love to His creatures), if He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, suspend the emanations of His quickening love, then all would perish at once." Our Version gives the sense: "If God set His heart upon man (*i.e.*, regarded him with enmity) then all would perish." The argument is evidently that, where absolute power coexists with unselfish love, injustice is impossible.

16-30. The second proof is, that, as a matter of fact, God deals with all men impartially; princes and people, rich and poor, are alike in his sight.

17. *Shall even he that hateth right govern?* Or, *What! doth He hating right govern?* No one who believes in God's omnipotence seriously questions His justice. See marg. ref. and Rom. iii. 5, 6.

most just] Or, *the just, the mighty*; *i.e.* in Whom might and justice are one.

- 18^a *Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked ?*
And to princes, Ye are ungodly ?
- 19 *How much less to him that^a accepteth not the persons of princes,*
Nor regardeth the rich more than the poor ?
For^b they all are the work of his hands.
- 20 *In a moment shall they die,*
And the people shall be troubled^c at midnight, and pass away :
And^d the mighty shall be taken away without hand.
- 21 *For his eyes are upon the ways of man,*
And he seeth all his goings.
- 22 *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death,*
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
- 23 *For he will not lay upon man more than right ;*
That he should^e enter into judgment with God.
- 24 *He shall break in pieces mighty men^f without number,*
And set others in their stead.
- 25 *Therefore he knoweth their works,*
And he overturneth them in the night, so that they are^g destroyed.
- 26 *He striketh them as wicked men—^h in the open sight of others ;*
- 27 *Because theyⁱ turned back^j from him,*
And^k would not consider any of his ways :
- 28 *So that they^l cause the cry of the poor to come unto him,*
And he^m heareth the cry of the afflicted.
- 29 *When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble ?*
And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him ?
Whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only :
- 30 *That the hypocrite reign not,—lestⁿ the people be ensnared.*
- 31 *Surely it is meet to be said unto God,*
I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more :
- 32 *That which I see not teach thou me :*
If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.
- 33 *Should it be according to thy mind ? he will recompense it,*
Whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose ; and not I :
Therefore speak what thou knowest.

^a Ex. 22. 28.

^b Deut. 10. 17.

^c 2 Chr. 19. 7.

^d Acts 10. 34.

^e Rom. 2. 11.

^f Gal. 2. 6.

^g Eph. 6. 9.

^h Col. 3. 25.

ⁱ 1 Pet. 1. 17.

^j 2 Chr. 31. 15.

^k Ex. 12. 29.

^l 30.

^m 2 Chr. 10. 9.

ⁿ ch. 31. 4.

^o Ps. 34. 15.

^p Prov. 5. 21.

^q & 15. 3.

^r Jer. 16. 17.

^s & 32. 19.

^t Ps. 139. 12.

^u Amos 9. 2, 3.

^v Heb. 4. 13.

^w Dan. 2. 21.

^x 1 Sam. 15.

^y 11.

^z Ps. 28. 5.

^{aa} Isai. 5. 12.

^{ab} ch. 35. 9.

^{ac} Jam. 5. 4.

^{ad} Ex. 22. 23.

^{ae} 1 Kin. 12.

^{af} 28, 30.

^{ag} 2 Kin. 21. 9.

^{ah} Dan. 9. 7.

^{ai} 14.

¹ Heb. they shall take away the mighty.

² Heb. go.

³ Heb. without searching

⁴ out.

⁵ Heb. crushed.

⁶ Heb. in the place of be-holders.

⁶ Heb. from after him.

⁷ Heb. Should it be from with thee?

18, 19. If a subject would be guilty of treason who accused his king, or his representatives, of corruption and injustice, what must be the guilt of thus accusing the King of kings ?

20. *shall they die*] Or, *they die*. The general course of Divine government subjects all God's creatures to an impartial doom.

troubled] Overthrown as by an earthquake.

without hand] i.e. without human agency; cp. Dan. ii. 34, 45, viii. 25; Lam. iv. 6.

21-23. The omniscience of God. Hence He will not impose on any one more than is due to Him, so as to give him the right, which Job has claimed, of contending with his Judge.

24. Or, *He breaketh the mighty without searching*; i.e. without investigation, such as is necessary in human judgments.

31-37. From these considerations Elihu draws the conclusion that Job has no course open but to bear his chastisement &c., and do no more iniquity. He closes with a wish that the trial may continue until the issue is complete.

33. The connexion of thought is probably this: "Shall God recompense (i.e. proceed in judgment) according to thy will? (Job's expressions of dissatisfaction with God's judgments justify the question). Thou hast despised His judgment and thou hast to choose, not I;" i.e. it is for Job, not for a mere bystander, to answer the question whether he will accept God's judgment or abide by

- 34 Let men ¹of understanding tell me,
And let a wise man hearken unto me.
- ^c ch. 35. 16. 35 ^cJob hath spoken without knowledge,
And his words *were* without wisdom.
- 36 ²My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end
Because of *his* answers for wicked men.
- 37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,
He clappeth *his hands* among us,
And multiplieth his words against God.
- CHAP. 35.** ELIHU spake moreover, and said,
2 Thinkest thou this to be right,
That thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?
- ^a ch. 21. 15. 3 For ^athou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee?
& 34. 9. *And, What profit shall I have, ³if I be cleansed from my sin?*
- ^b ch. 34. 8. 4 ⁴I will answer thee,—and ^bthy companions with thee.
- ^c ch. 22. 12. 5 ^cLook unto the heavens, and see;
And behold the clouds *which* are higher than thou.
- ^d Prov. 8. 36. 6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou ^aagainst him?
Jer. 7. 19. Or *if* thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?
- ^e ch. 22. 2, 3. 7 ^eIf thou be righteous, what givest thou him?
Ps. 16. 2. Or what receiveth he of thine hand?
Prov. 9. 12. 8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art;
Rom. 11. 35. And thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.
- ^f Ex. 2. 23. 9 ^fBy reason of the multitude of oppressions they *make the*
ch. 34. 28. *oppressed* to cry:
They cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.
- ^g Isai. 51. 13. 10 But none saith, ^gWhere *is* God my maker,
^h Ps. 42. 8. ^hWho giveth songs in the night;
& 77. 6. 11 Who ⁱteacheth us more than the beasts of the earth,
& 149. 5. And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?
Acts 16. 25. 12 ^kThere they cry, but none giveth answer,
ⁱ Ps. 94. 12. Because of the pride of evil men.
^k Prov. 1. 23.
- ¹ Heb. *of heart*.
² Or, *My father, let Job be tried*.
³ Or, by it *more than by* my sin?
⁴ Heb. *I will return to thee words*.

his own opinions. "Therefore speak what thou knowest," what is the conclusion to which you deliberately adhere?

36. *because of his answers for wicked men*] i.e. such as wicked men only would give.

Elihu is offended at the tone of Job's expostulations. His own conviction that chastisements proceed from love involved the condemnation of one who could see in them nothing but indications of enmity.

XXXV. Elihu deals with the assertion that a life of righteousness had brought Job no corresponding blessings; he argues that man's righteousness constitutes no claim upon God (vv. 1-8); and that when God disregards appeals to His justice it is because they are urged without humility and faith (vv. 9-13); hence the duty of submitting to Him with full trust in His justice.

2. *My righteousness is more than God's*] Elihu draws a strong and hardly fair inference from Job's statements that his own

righteousness had not been recognized. The LXX. rendering, "I am just before God," implies connexion with the following verses: "Does that righteousness consist in arguments like these?"

3. The latter clause is rightly given in the margin. *What do I gain* (from righteousness) *more than* (I should have gained) *from sinning*?

10. The cry of the oppressed is often unanswered because men who suffer do not pray aright; God giveth songs in the night; the truly pious man, instead of groaning, sings hymns of praise in his deep affliction. Cp. marg. ref.

11. *more than*] The clause may perhaps be rendered, "by means of the beasts...and fowls;" in which case Elihu takes up Job's words (xii. 7).

12. *There*] i.e. in that state of mind, without piety and faith; so that, although they really suffer wrong, their cry is disre-

- 13¹ Surely God will not hear vanity,
Neither will the Almighty regard it.
- 14² Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him,
Yet judgment *is* before him; therefore ³trust thou in him.
- 15 But now, because *it is* not so, ¹he hath ^ovisited in his anger;
Yet ²he knoweth *it* not in great extremity:
- 16² Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain;
He multiplieth words without knowledge.

¹ ch. 27. 9.
Prov. 15. 29.
Isai. 1. 15.
Jer. 11. 11.
² ch. 9. 11.
³ Ps. 37. 5, 6.
^o Ps. 89. 32.

² ch. 24. 25,
37.
& 38. 2.

CHAP. 36. ELIHU also proceeded, and said,

- 2 Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee
³That *I have* yet to speak on God's behalf.
- 3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
- 4 For truly my words *shall* not be false:
He that is perfect in knowledge *is* with thee.
- 5 Behold, God *is* mighty, and despiseth not any:
^aHe *is* mighty in strength and ⁴wisdom.
- 6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked:
But giveth right to the ⁵poor.
- 7^b He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous:
But ~~with~~ kings *are* they on the throne;
Yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.
- 8 And ^dif *they be* bound in fetters,
~~And~~ be holden in cords of affliction;
- 9 Then he sheweth them their work,
And their transgressions that they have exceeded.
- 10^c He openeth also their ear to discipline,
And commandeth that they return from iniquity.

^a ch. 9. 4.
& 12. 13, 16.
& 37. 23.
^b ch. 30. 4.
^c Ps. 33. 18.
& 34. 15.
^d Ps. 113. 8.

^d Ps. 107. 10.

^c ch. 33. 16,
23.

¹ That is, *God*.
² That is, *Job*.

³ Heb. *that* there are yet
words for *God*.

⁴ Heb. *heart*.
⁵ Or, *afflicted*.

garded (James iv. 3). Elihu thus meets the complaints of Job that his cry is unanswered.

15, 16. Render, "And now, because God hath not punished his (Job's) anger, and doth not regard his insolence greatly, therefore doth Job &c." Job's charges prove that he has not yet suffered sufficiently. Or the connexion of thought may be, "And now, because God hath not visited Job in wrath, as he deserved, and hath not taken full account of his insolence, his spirit is unbroken, and he continues to speak rebelliously against God."

XXXVI.-XXXVII. The last discourse of Elihu. He proceeds to prove that God is righteous, *first*, because He does justice to the afflicted, and raises the righteous to dignity, and watches over them continually (vv. 5-7); *secondly*, because He makes their afflictions work for their good (vv. 8-11); and *thirdly*, because the result of the punishment is just; if men do not submit, they perish; if they repent, they are restored (vv. 12-16). Job is warned against God's wrath and admonished to magnify the work of

God (vv. 17-25). Then (ch. xxxvii.) follows a description of the Almighty of God.

4. *perfect in knowledge*] Elihu means that he speaks with a perfect conviction of the truth of his arguments.

5. *despiseth not any*] This refers to Job's reproaches of God for neglecting and despising his cause. No created being is too mean to be regarded by Him.

and wisdom] Or (see marg.), "He is mighty in strength of heart," i.e. of understanding.

6. *the poor*] i.e. "the poor in spirit," the meek and humble. God gives equal attention both to the wicked and to the poor, though he destroys one and saves the other.

7. God's unceasing watchfulness over the righteous is shewn equally in their prosperity (when they are "with kings, &c."), and in their adversity (v. 8).

9. *their work*] i.e. the true character of their acts: the evil that is in them. The object of the afflictions is to arrest and chastise them when they are going wrong.

that they have exceeded] Or, *that they have become overweening, great in their own conceit* (cp. xv. 25).

- f ch. 21. 13. They shall spend their days in prosperity,
 Isai. 1.19, 20. And their years in pleasures.
 12 But if they obey not,—¹they shall perish by the sword,
 And they shall die without knowledge.
 o Rom. 2. 5. 13 But the hypocrites in heart ^oheap up wrath:
 They cry not when he bindeth them.
 A ch. 15. 32. 14 ^A2 They die in youth,—and their life is among the ³unclean.
 & 22. 16.
 Ps. 55. 23. 15 He delivereth the ⁴poor in his affliction,
 And openeth their ears in oppression.
 16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait
 ' Ps. 18. 19. ' Into a broad place, where *there is* no straitness;
 & 31. 8. And ⁵* that which should be set on thy table *should be full of*
 & 118. 5. ' fatness.
 * Ps. 23. 5. 17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked:
 ' Ps. 36. 8. ' Judgment and justice take hold on thee.
 18 Because *there is* wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his
 stroke:
 m Ps. 40. 7. Then ^ma great ransom cannot ⁷deliver thee.
 n Prov. 11. 4. 19 ⁿ Will he esteem thy riches?
 No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.
 20 Desire not the night,—when people are cut off in their place
 o Ps. 66. 18. 21 Take heed, ^oregard not iniquity:
 p See Heb. For ^pthis hast thou chosen rather than affliction.
 11. 25.
 q Isai. 40. 13, 22 Behold, God exalteth by his power:—^qwho teacheth like him?
 14.
 Rom. 11. 34. 1 Heb. *they shall pass away* o Or, *sodomites*, Deut. 23.17. 6 Or, *judgment and justice*
 1 Cor. 2. 16. 2 Heb. *by the sword.* o Or, *afflicted.* should uphold thee.
 3 Heb. *Their soul dieth.* 5 Heb. *the rest of thy table.* 7 Heb. *turn thee aside.*

11. *prosperity...pleasures*] i.e. "good," all sources of pure enjoyment, and the deepest and highest happiness. Cp. Ps. xvi. 11.

12. *by the sword*] Judicial punishment. *without knowledge*] Because they would not receive instruction, they knew not the day of their visitation (iv. 21; Hos. iv. 6).

13. *wrath*] Either, angry rebellious feelings against God; or, rather, the wrath of God against man (Rom. ii. 5).

14. Or, as in marg., "their soul dieth," i.e. they come to a premature end like youths who have destroyed the spring of life by licentiousness.

unclean] See Deut. xxiii. 17, note. The literal meaning is "consecrated," i.e. devoted to the service of Astarte.

15. *in affliction...in oppression*] Or, by *affliction...by suffering*. Affliction &c. is the very means of their deliverance (xxxiii. 15-28; Ps. cxix. 67, 71; Heb. xii. 11).

16. Some render: "And thou also hast been seduced from (listening to) the voice of affliction (see v. 9) by thy boundless prosperity, and by the ease of thy table which was full of fatness:" a rendering which makes Elihu assume that Job was overcome by the very temptation of which he had feared the effect upon his children (i. 4, 5).

17. Or, "And thou art full of the judgment of the wicked, judgment and punish-

ment hold fast of thee;" i.e. the result of hardness or insensibility to previous warnings is, that Job is undergoing the punishment of obstinate sinners, the punishment inseparable from justice.

18. The most probable meaning is, **because there is wrath** (i.e. in Job's heart), **let it not seduce thee in (thy) affliction** (or, "abundance"); **and let not the great ransom** (i.e. the riches which thou canst offer in atonement) **turn thee aside**. The "great ransom" may, however, mean the great sufferings which were intended to bring Job to a sense of his sin, which would be accepted as a propitiatory sacrifice (see xxxiii. 24-28).

19. The rendering may be, "Will He regard outcry? Not in affliction (i.e. not even in severe affliction, so long as it proceeds from a rebellious spirit); nor (will He regard) any efforts of strength," i.e. any desperate struggles:—a reproof applicable to Job, who had given no indications of trust in wealth, but had repeatedly expressed a desire that his bitter cry might be available.

20. An allusion to Job's repeated prayers to be cut off at once, and hid in the grave. Such a desire shews little fear of God's judgments, which Job had himself described (xxvii. 19, 20, xxxiv. 25).

22. *who teacheth like him?*] The key-note of Elihu's whole discourse (cp. xxxiii. 14,

- 23 ^aWho hath enjoined him his way?
Or ^awho can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?
- 24 Remember that thou 'magnify his work,—which men behold.
25 Every man may see it;—man may behold *it* afar off.
- 26 Behold, God *is* great, and we ^aknow *him* not,
^aNeither can the number of his years be searched out.
- 27 For he ^amaketh small the drops of water:
They pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:
- 28 ^aWhich the clouds do drop
And distil upon man abundantly.
- 29 Also can *any* understand the spreadings of the clouds,
Or the noise of his tabernacle?
- 30 Behold, he ^aspreadeth his light upon it,
And covereth ¹the bottom of the sea.
- 31 For ^bby them judgeth he the people;
He ^cgiveth meat in abundance.
- 32 ^dWith clouds he covereth the light;
And commandeth it *not to shine* by the cloud that cometh betwixt.
- 33 ^eThe noise thereof sheweth concerning it,
The cattle also concerning ²the vapour.

^a ch. 34. 13.
^a ch. 34. 10.
^f Ps. 92. 5.
Rev. 15. 3.
^a 1 Cor. 13. 12.
^a Ps. 90. 2.
& 102. 24, 27.
Heb. 1. 12.
^g Ps. 147. 8.
^h Prov. 3. 20.

^a ch. 37. 3.

^b ch. 37. 13.
& 38. 23.
^c Ps. 136. 25.
Acts 14. 17.
^d Ps. 147. 8.
^e 1 Kin. 18. 41, 45.

- CHAP. 37.** AT this also my heart trembleth,
And ^ais moved out of his place.
- 2 ³Hear attentively the noise of his voice,
And the sound *that* goeth out of his mouth.
- 3 He directeth it under the whole heaven,
And his ⁴lightning unto the ⁵ends of the earth.
- 4 After it ^aa voice roareth:
He thundereth with the voice of his excellency;
And he will not stay them when his voice is heard.
- 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice;

^c Ps. 29. 3.
& 68. 33.

¹ Heb. *the roots*.

² Heb. *that which goeth up*.

³ Heb. *Hear, in hearing*.

⁴ Heb. *light*.

⁵ Heb. *wings of the earth*.

xxxv. 11, xxxvi. 9). All the manifestations of power and justice have for their primary and direct object the instruction of man's heart.

24. *magnify*] By submission, by confession, by letting His punishment do its perfect work.

behold] Rather, "sing," i.e. celebrate. All men see what has befallen Job; it is his duty to prove by his conduct that God visited him with the righteousness and love which men celebrate.

27, 28. Rain always presents itself first to an Oriental mind as the greatest source of all blessings.

27. The probable meaning is, "For He draweth up drops of water: they flow down as rain for His mist," i.e. for the purpose of watering the earth (Gen. ii. 6).

29 &c. A vivid description of a rising storm, preparing the minds of all present for the manifestation of the Godhead in the whirlwind (see xxxviii. 1 note).

the spreadings] The rapid expansion of clouds, the gathering from all quarters, sure indications of the coming storm.

the noise of his tabernacle] The first crash of thunder, as it were, the crash of the Lord's tent; the Great King moving from His place (cp. Ps. xviii. 11, 12).

30. The flashes of lightning cover the whole earth, as with a mantle of glorious light, and they reach even to the depths of the sea.

31. Two opposite effects; judgment upon the nations, abundance of food to His people.

32, 33. These two verses are exceedingly obscure, and the meaning of nearly every word is disputed. Interpret them: "He clotheth His hands with light (sc. lightning), and giveth it command whom it shall reach; the sound thereof (the crash which follows the lightning) announces concerning Him fierceness of wrath against unrighteousness."

XXXVII. 1. There is no break between this chapter and the last. Elihu describes the effects of the storm upon man.

4. *he will not stay them*] i.e. He sends flash after flash without intermission.

- ^b ch. 5. 9.
^a 9. 10.
^a 38. 28.
 Rev. 15. 3.
^c Ps. 147. 16,
 17.
^d Ps. 109. 27.
^e Ps. 104. 22.
^f ch. 38. 39,
 30.
 Ps. 147. 17,
 18.
^g Ps. 148. 8.
^h Ex. 9. 18, 23.
 1 Sam. 12.
 18, 19.
 Ezra 10. 9.
 ch. 36. 31.
ⁱ ch. 38. 26,
 27.
^k 2 Sam. 21.
 10.
 1 Kin. 18. 45.
^l Ps. 111. 2.
^m ch. 38. 29.
ⁿ ch. 36. 4.
^o Gen. 1. 6.
 Isai. 44. 24.
^b Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.
 6 For ^ehe saith to the snow, Be thou *on* the earth;
^lLikewise to the small rain,
 And to the great rain of his strength.
 7 He sealeth up the hand of every man;
^dThat all men may know his work.
 8 Then the beasts ^ego into dens,—and remain in their places.
 9 ²Out of the south cometh the whirlwind:
 And cold out of the ³north.
 10 ^fBy the breath of God frost is given:
 And the breadth of the waters is straitened.
 11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud:
 He scattereth ^hhis bright cloud:
 12 And it is turned round about by his counsels:
 That they may ^gdo whatsoever he commandeth them
 Upon the face of the world in the earth.
 13 ^hHe causeth it to come, whether for ⁵correction,
 Or ⁱfor his land, or ^kfor mercy.
 14 Hearken unto this, O Job:
 Stand still, and ^lconsider the wondrous works of God.
 15 Dost thou know when God disposed them,
 And caused the light of his cloud to shine?
 16 ^mDost thou know the balancings of the clouds,
 The wondrous works of ⁿhim which is perfect in knowledge?
 17 How thy garments *are* warm,
 When he quieteth the earth by the south *wind*?
 18 Hast thou with him ^ospread out the sky,
 Which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?
 19 Teach us what we shall say unto him;
 For we cannot order *our speech* by reason of darkness.

¹ Heb. *and to the shower of rain, and to the showers of rain of his strength.*

² Heb. *Out of the chamber.*
³ Heb. *scattering winds.*

⁴ Heb. *the cloud of his light.*
⁵ Heb. *a rod.*

6-10. The thunder reminds Elihu of all other manifestations of God's power. The fall of snow, always portentous to the mind of an Eastern; then "**the gush of rain,**" "the great rain of His strength," the heavy downfall and rush of rain which follows the thunder-crash.

6. *Be thou on the earth*] *i.e.* Fall on the earth.

7. *He sealeth up*] *i.e.* He brings all human labours to a stand-still as in winter, so that men may meditate upon His work, or have a season for reflection. Elihu here reverts to his fixed thought, whatever God does has man's *instruction* for its object.

8. The hush that follows the first burst: the beasts go to their dens, the world is left to man alone in the Presence of God.

9. *the south*] Rather, the "secret place," the depository of God's agencies.

out of the north] Or, from His cloud-scattering winds (see marg.).

11. Or, *Also with vapours He loadeth the cloud, the heavy clouds gathering again thickly after the hail-storm.*

he scattereth &c.] Or, "He spreadeth

abroad the cloud of His light," the dense cloud pregnant with lightning. Some think that the burst of lightning shattering the clouds is described.

12. *it*] *i.e.* "the lightning." It darts hither and thither in all directions; but ever for the fulfilment of His behests; whether for a scourge, or for the earth (to fertilize it), or for purposes of mercy (v. 13). Cp. xxxvi. 32 note; and Gen. iii. 24.

14 &c. Hence the duty of patience, not knowing the how, the why, or the wherefore, what can we do but wait?

17. The thought is obscure; probably Elihu means, "Canst thou, who feelest without understanding the very slightest effects of God's works in nature, presume to judge His ways?"

18. *strong, and as &c.*] This does not mean that the sky is solid; but that the marvel is that the sky being so vaporous should retain its everlasting brightness like a mirror of polished metal, notwithstanding all the storms which pass over it.

19. *darkness*] Mental and moral.

20 Shall it be told him that I speak ?

If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

21 And now *men* see not the bright light which *is* in the clouds :

But the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

22 ¹Fair weather cometh out of the north :

With God *is* terrible majesty.

23 *Touching* the Almighty, ²we cannot find him out : *he is* excellent in power,

And in judgment, and in plenty of justice : he will not afflict.

24 Men do therefore ³fear him :

He respecteth not any *that are* ⁴wise of heart.

CHAP. 38. THEN the LORD answered Job ⁵out of the whirlwind, and said,

2 ⁶Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel

By ⁷words without knowledge ?

3 ⁸Gird up now thy loins like a man ;

For I will demand of thee, and ⁹answer thou me.

4 ¹⁰Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ?

Declare, ¹¹if thou hast understanding.

¹ Heb. *Gold*.

² Heb. *make me know*.

³ Heb. *if thou knowest understanding*.

¹ 1 Tim. 6. 16.
² ch. 36. 5.

³ Matt. 10. 29.

⁴ Matt. 11. 27.

⁵ 1 Cor. 1. 26.

⁶ So Exod.

19. 16, 18.

⁷ 1 Kin. 19. 11.

Ezek. 1. 4.

⁸ Nah. 1. 3.

⁹ ch. 34. 35.

¹⁰ & 42. 3.

¹¹ 1 Tim. 1. 7.

¹² ch. 40. 7.

¹³ Ps. 104. 5.

Prov. 8. 29.

& 30. 4.

20. *that I speak*] In allusion to Job's wish (xxxi. 35). Render the second clause, *Or hath a man ever said that he would fain be destroyed ?* i.e. such a wish is unnatural and unpardonable.

21. *And now &c.*] Or, *And now men cannot behold the bright light in the sky*. The storm is gone, the sky cleared of its clouds is full of light so glorious that man cannot look upon it.

22. *Fair weather*] Or, as in the margin, *gold*; i.e. a golden glow.

23. A summary of the whole of Elihu's speech; all God's attributes harmonize with each other, and find their perfect manifestation in love.

he will not afflict] i.e. not greatly, or willingly; affliction is not an end but a means. Some prefer another reading; "and He will not answer," i.e. He will give no account of His acts, which cannot but be righteous.

24. Hence true, godly fear. Job's danger, to Elihu's mind, was confidence in his own wisdom: but God regards the character and the will; and, until the inner man is corrected, He will not hearken to struggles or murmurs.

XXXVIII.-XLI. The four following chapters contain the answer of the Lord God. (See *Intro.* p. 5.) The mind of Job had been prepared for the Theophany, or manifestation, first, by the careful review of his past life; and then by the discourses of Elihu. All that he now needs is a personal revelation, to be brought face to face with Him Whom in the midst of his great misery he had ventured to arraign.

Job now learnt the lesson, that although

the special object, which God may have in any one of His works, may be wholly undiscoverable, if not incomprehensible to man; yet that they each and all display a wisdom, providence, and adaptation of means to ends, which are inseparably connected with absolute goodness, and should teach man to submit, without question or reluctance, to whatever He, the Almighty Maker and King, may ordain or permit.

1. *out of the whirlwind*] The voice of the Lord was heard, though no form was seen. As the storm was passing away with a vehement wind, clearing the heavens and presenting a lively symbol of the terrible majesty of God, Job felt the near Presence of his Maker (cp. *marg. ref.*); the word rang through his heart, it brought back all that he had ever learned of His works, and led him to implicit submission to infinite wisdom and love.

2. Job had "darkened counsel," i.e. cast doubts upon the wise and loving purposes of the divine administration, and had concluded with a challenge which shewed the need of humiliation. That false position must be abandoned.

4. *Where wast thou &c.*] The question probably refers to the speculations of Job in ch. xxviii., and implies that even in the highest and most reverential movement of the human mind there is a somewhat bordering on presumption.

[said the foundations] This expression does not mean that the earth, according to old heathen cosmical notions, rested on a basis out of itself. The original has simply when I founded the earth, i.e. created and established it. See *xxvi. 7* note.

- 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
6 Whereupon are the ¹foundations thereof ²fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
7 When the morning stars sang together,
And all ³the sons of God shouted for joy?
8 Or who shut up the sea with doors,
When it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?
9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,
10 And ^{3a}brake up for it my decreed place,
And set bars and doors,
11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further:
And here shall ⁴thy proud waves ⁵be stayed?
12 Hast thou ⁶commanded the morning since thy days;
And caused the dayspring to know his place;
13 That it might take hold of the ⁷ends of the earth,
That ⁸the wicked might be shaken out of it?
14 It is turned as clay to the seal;—and they stand as a garment.
15 And from the wicked their ⁹light is withholden,
And ¹⁰the high arm shall be broken.
16 Hast thou ¹¹entered into the springs of the sea?
- ¹ Heb. sockets.
² Heb. made to sink?
³ Or, established my decree upon it.
⁴ Heb. the pride of thy waves.
⁵ Heb. wings.

5. *measures...line*] Order in creation is prominently recognized. It is a reign of law.
6. *fastened*] Or *sunk*. The expressions are metaphorical; the earth is compared to a building, whose "foundations" (a word quite distinct from that in *v.* 4; properly the bases of a column) are the lower strata on which the earth's surface rests.

corner stone] Cp. Ps. cxviii. 22; Zech. iv. 7.

7. The stars are represented as in existence before the earth assumed its actual shape; an important point in reference to Hebrew cosmogony. The expression "sang together" is metaphorical (cp. Ps. xix. 1-3, cxlviii. 3).

sons of God] *i.e.* the Angels (marg. ref.), whose pre-existence is thus distinctly affirmed. This representation of creation is a poetical development of the first chapter of Genesis. Cp. Luke ii. 9-13.

8-11. This refers to Gen. i. 9. It is a magnificent realization of the mighty rush of the waters when the mountains were upheaved. The words "gathered together" in Genesis express a rapid simultaneous motion. The ocean is here personified as a new-born giant, shut in, confined, wrapt and swaddled in the first outburst of its might.

10. Lit. "and I brake over it my decree;" a reference to the absoluteness of the restraining law, once given it needs no repetition.

12. *since thy days*] *i.e.* "since thy days began. On any one day of thy short life hast

thou called forth the morning, as God doth daily?"

13, 14. The figures in these verses represent vividly two effects of the light, the one moral, evil-doers are discomfited by it (cp. xxiv. 17); the other physical, earth assumes new form and beauty. Light seizes the extremities of the earth, and causes, so to speak, a shock, by which the children of darkness are panic-struck and shaken off its surface.

14. *It is turned as clay to the seal*] Or, *It is changed as seal-clay*: *i.e.* just as the fine clay (used as wax by the ancients) is changed, pressed into a distinct form by the seal, so the earth, which during the night lies a shapeless mass, suddenly assumes colour when the light falls upon it, and with colour distinct form.

and they stand] Or, "And all things stand out as a garment:" radiant with distinct hues and rich embroidery.

15. *their light*] *i.e.* the darkness which to the wicked is as light, in which they do their work (see xxiv. 13-17).

16-27. The impossibility of knowing the origin, end, object or course of creation, is shewn by reference to the depths of ocean, to the unseen world, to the extent of earth, to the alternations of light and darkness, and to natural phenomena, their causes, uses, and effects.

16. *springs of the sea*] Lit. "weepings:" *i.e.* the sources, or, as in Gen. vii. 11, "the fountaining of the great deep."

- . Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth ?
 17 Have ²the gates of death been opened unto thee ? * Ps. 9. 13.
 Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death ?
 18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth ?
 Declare if thou knowest it all.
 19 Where *is* the way *where* light dwelleth ?
 And *as for* darkness, where *is* the place thereof,
 20 That thou shouldest take it ¹to the bound thereof,
 And that thou shouldest know the paths *to* the house thereof ?
 21 Knowest thou *it*, because thou wast then born ?
 Or *because* the number of thy days *is* great ?
 22 Hast thou entered into ⁴the treasures of the snow ? * Ps. 135. 7.
 Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
 23 ⁷Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,
 Against the day of battle and war ? * Ex. 9. 18.
Josh. 10. 11.
Isai. 30. 30.
Ezek. 13. 11,
13.
Rev. 16. 21.
* ch. 28. 26.
 24 By what way *is* the light parted,
 Which scattereth the east wind upon the earth ?
 25 Who ⁴hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters,
 Or a way for the lightning of thunder ;
 26 To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man *is* ;
 On the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man ;
 27 ⁴To satisfy the desolate and waste ground ;
 And ⁴to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth ? * Ps. 107. 35.
 28 ⁴Hath the rain a father ?
 Or who hath begotten the drops of dew ?
 29 Out of whose womb came the ice ?
 And the ²hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it ? * Ps. 147. 8.
Jer. 14. 22.
 30 The waters are hid *as with* a stone,
 And the face of the deep ²is ⁷frozen. * Ps. 147. 16.
* ch. 37. 10.
 31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of ³⁴Pleiades,
 Or loose the bands of ⁶Orion ? * Amos 5. 8.
 32 Canst thou bring forth ⁶Mazzaroth in his ¹season ?
 Or canst thou ⁷guide Arcturus with his sons ?

¹ Or, at.

² Heb. *is taken*.

³ Or, *The seven stars*.

⁴ Heb. *Cimah*.

⁵ Heb. *Cecil* ?

⁶ Or, *The twelve signs*.

⁷ Heb. *guide them*.

in the search of the depth] Or, *in the recess of the deep*. The word rendered "search" means here, as in viii. 8, that which is an object of research, or which men vainly attempt to fathom.

17. Cp. xvii. 16 note.

18. *perceived*] Or *comprehended*: has that intelligence of which man boasts, extended even to the breadth of the whole earth ?

19. *the way*] The LXX. read "the land," which suits the context.

20. Job is asked whether he knows the source of light so as to be able to determine the boundary or limits of light and darkness.

23. *time of trouble*] *i.e.* the time in which God's judgments are accomplished by natural agencies. There is no special reference to such interventions as those which marked the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan.

24. *which scattereth &c.*] Or, *Doth the*

east wind scatter itself over the earth ? Omit "which" and repeat "by what way." Two distinct questions are asked referring severally to the distribution of light and of wind.

25. *Who hath divided &c.*] Or, *Who hath riven a channel for the torrent of waters ?* *i.e.* for the heavy rains which descend like a torrent through the riven atmosphere.

30. Or, *The waters are hardened like stone, and the surface of the deep is held fast*. The word rendered "frozen" is more correctly rendered in xli. 15, "shut up together."

31-33. The phenomena of the heavens.

31. The general sense is ; No created being can either draw together the heavenly bodies, or disturb their union. On Pleiades and Orion see ix. 9 note.

32. *Mazzaroth*] It is doubtful what constellation is meant. The etymology of the word indicates that a constellation or star

- ^a Jor. 31. 35. 33 Knowest thou "the ordinances of heaven ?
Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth ?
34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,
That abundance of waters may cover thee ?
35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go,
And say unto thee, 'Here we are ?
^b ch. 32. 8. 36 ^b Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts ?
^{Ps.} 51. 6. Or who hath given understanding to the heart
^{Eccles.} 2. 26. 37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom ?
Or ² who can stay the bottles of heaven,
38 ³ When the dust ⁴ groweth into hardness,
And the clods cleave fast together ?
^c ^{Ps.} 104. 21. 39 ^c Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion ?
[&] 145. 15. Or fill ⁵ the appetite of the young lions,
40 When they couch in *their* dens,
And abide in the covert to lie in wait ?
^d ^{Ps.} 147. 9. 41 ^d Who provideth for the raven his food ?
^{Matt.} 6. 26. When his young ones cry unto God,
They wander for lack of meat.

CHAP. 39. KNOWEST thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth ?

- ^a ^{Ps.} 29. 9. Or canst thou mark when ^a the hinds do calve ?
2 Canst thou number the months *that* they fulfil ?
Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth ?
3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones,
They cast out their sorrows.
4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with ^{corn} :
They go forth, and return not unto them.
5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free ?
Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass ?
^b ch. 24. 5. 6 ^b Whose house I have made the wilderness,
^{Jer.} 2. 24. And the ⁶ barren land his dwellings.
^{Hos.} 8. 9.

¹ Heb. Behold us ?

² Heb. who can cause to lie down.

³ Or, When the dust is turned into mire.

⁴ Heb. is poured.

⁵ Heb. the life.

⁶ Heb. salt places.

of peculiar brightness, is certainly meant; very probably the planet Jupiter or Venus (Vulg. Lucifer), shining with peculiar splendour at certain seasons, or the Sirius of the Egyptians, whose "coming forth" determined the chronology of the seasons and years.

34. *thy voice*] i.e. "Canst thou, like God, produce thunder followed by heavy rain ?"

36. The wisdom here spoken of is the gift of discerning the causes, or of regulating the course, of the natural phenomena described.

37. *stay &c.*] The sense appears to be, "who can turn the clouds down, so as to empty them like skins of water ?"

38. *into hardness*] Or, when the dust is molten into a mass. The words describe the effect of rain upon the loose dust which it consolidates.

39. *the lion*] Rather, "the lioness," in search of prey for her whelps. The thought of God providing for the beasts of prey, for carrion-birds, hostile or loathsome to man,

forcibly illustrates the narrowness of utilitarian speculation.

fill the appetite] Or, satisfy the craving of the whelps.

XXXIX. 1. *Knowest thou*] There is no question here of idle and merely speculative knowledge, but of that knowledge which belongs to God only, by which He not only knows all things, but directs and governs them.

wild goats] Literally, "rock-climbers," a generic term including the ibex.

3. *their sorrows*] i.e. their young brought forth in pain.

4. *are in good liking*] Or fatten, grow up lusty and strong.

with corn] Or, "in the wilderness," far from their dams, whom they forsake very early.

5. *wild ass*] The animal has here two names in Hebrew, that in the first clause denoting speed, that in the second shyness or untameableness.

6. *barren land*] Or, salt waste deserts

- 7^a He scorneth the multitude of the city,
Neither regardeth he the crying ¹ of the driver.
- 8 The range of the mountains *is* his pasture,
And he searcheth after every green thing.
- 9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee,—or abide by thy ^a crib? ^{Deut 33.17.}
- 10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow?
Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?
- 11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength *is* great?
Or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?
- 12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed,
And gather it into thy barn?
- 13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks?
Or ² wings and feathers unto the ostrich?
- 14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth,
And warmeth them in dust,
- 15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them,
Or that the wild beast may break them.
- 16 She is ^a hardened against her young ones, as though *they were* ^d *Lam. 4. 3.*
not her's:
Her labour is in vain without fear;
- 17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom,
Neither hath he ^a imparted to her understanding. ^a ch. 35. 11.
- 18 What time she lifteth up herself on high,
She scorneth the horse and his rider.
- 19 Hast thou given the horse strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?
- 20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?
The glory of his nostrils *is* ³ terrible.

¹ Heb. of the exactor, ch. 3. 18.

² Or, the feathers of the stork and ostrich.

³ Heb. terror.

thickly incrustated with natron, or salt, which the wild asses are known to lick with avidity.

7. *the driver*] Or *task-master*; the same word as in Exod. v. 6.

8. *The range*] A good rendering of the Hebrew (lit. "search"). A slight change of pointing would give "He ranges the mountains as his pasture."

9. *the unicorn*] Or *Râm*, the Aurochs, a well-known species of gazelle. See note on Num. xxiii. 22 note.

13. *the peacocks*] The word so rendered, which literally means a wild tremulous cry, denotes the female ostrich. Translate, *The pinion of the ostrich exulteth, but hath she the fond wing and plumage of the stork?* The meaning appears to be, the ostrich has quivering wings, pinions and plumage like those of birds remarkable for their care of their young, but has it the same qualities? The affectionateness and fine instinct of the stork are noted by ancient naturalists.

14. The nest of the ostrich is always in the sand, deep and round, with layers of eggs, about thirty. The "leaving" does

not mean forsaking, but simply committing to the sand.

16. *hardened*] When the ostrich finds that her nest is discovered, she crushes the whole brood and builds a nest elsewhere.

17. *deprived her*] The point here, as throughout the discourse, is the inscrutableness of God's ways: the mysteries of instinct often perplex men.

18. *she scorneth*] Hence the proverb, "swifter than an ostrich." When there is a breeze the ostrich rises at once, and rapidly outstrips her pursuers. The word rendered "lifteth up herself" occurs in no other passage, and means apparently "lashes the air."

19. *thunder*] "Clothed with terror," may be the best rendering; it includes the idea of a vehement and terrific movement.

20. *make him afraid*] Or, *make him spring*, the word describes the terrible rush at the moment of charging: the combination of the utmost lightness with the greatest force.

the glory of his nostrils] Or, "the glory of his snorting is terror." Terror and admiration are blended. Cp. Jer. viii. 16.

- 21 ¹He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in *his* strength :
 / Jer. 8. 6. / He goeth on to meet ²the armed men.
 22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted ;
 Neither turneth he back from the sword.
 23 The quiver rattleth against him,
 The glittering spear and the shield.
 24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage :
 Neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the trumpet.
 25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha ;
 And he smelleth the battle afar off,
 The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.
 26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,
 And stretch her wings toward the south ?
 27 Doth the eagle mount up ³at thy command,
 And ⁴make her nest on high ?
 σ Jer. 49. 16. Obad. 4. 28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock,
 Upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.
 29 From thence she seeketh the prey, —and her eyes behold afar off.
 30 Her young ones also suck up blood :
 And ⁵where the slain *are*, there *is* she.
 h Matt. 24. 28. Luke 17. 37.
CHAP. 40. MOREOVER the LORD answered Job, and said,
 a ch. 33. 13. 2 Shall he that ⁶contendeth with the Almighty instruct *him* ?
 He that reproveth God, let him answer it.
 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
 b Ezra 9. 6. 4 ⁷Behold, I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ?
 ch. 42. 6. c I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.
 Ps. 51. 4. 5 Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer :
 c ch. 20. 9. Ps. 39. 9. Yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further.

¹ Or, His feet dig.² Heb. *the armour*.³ Heb. *by thy mouth*.

21. *the valley*] Lit. “a depressed or level plain,” fit for an engagement of cavalry.

the armed men] The heavy-armed infantry, trained so as to resist the onset of horsemen.

23. The arms of the rider rattle against the side of the war-horse in its on-rush.

24. *swalloweth the ground*] i.e. the space between the armies disappears as though swallowed up.

neither believeth he] The steed waits impatiently for the signal of onset, and when it sounds can scarcely believe that its hope is realized. The only animal which in this discourse is mentioned in connexion with the uses of man, is that which is represented as mixing with the strongest warriors as their equal, or superior, an object of admiration, of awe and terror. Other creatures are independent of man, or useless to him ; this tramples him down, and “mocketh at fear.”

25. *He saith &c.*] Or, At every blast of the trumpet he crieth Aha ! The loud neighing answers the call.

26. *the hawk*] Even more striking is the utter independence of migratory birds of prey.

toward the south] Moved by an instinct wholly unconnected with human wants.

30. *where the slain are*] The only point of contact between the eagle and man.

Thus throughout the discourse two points are kept before Job, the infinite wisdom of God, shewn in the imparting instincts infinitely varied and marvellously satisfied, and in the impossibility of discovering the regulating or central principle. The inference which Job ought to draw is, that he knows nothing, and can know nothing, save that God is unsearchable, and that man's one duty is unquestioning submission.

XL. 2. The great point is thus determined : any reasoning, which implies a right to remonstrate with the Almighty, or to dictate the course which He ought to adopt, is presumption.

3-5. The first effects are humiliation and submission : but these are not enough. What is wanted is teachableness and perfect trust, of which this first confession of Job does not give any clear indication : hence the occasion for a second address.

5. *Once...twice*] All the previous speeches of Job were pervaded by two thoughts, which he no longer defends ; he will no more assume that God's visitations imply

6 • Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and ^a ch. 38. 1. said,

7 • Gird up thy loins now like a man :

I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

^a ch. 38. 3.

8 • Wilt thou also disannul my judgment ?

^f ch. 42. 4.

Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous ?

^g Ps. 51. 4.

Rom. 3. 4.

9 Hast thou an arm like God ?

Or canst thou thunder with ^ha voice like him ?

^h ch. 37. 4.

10 • Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency ;

Ps. 29. 3. 4.

And array thyself with glory and beauty.

ⁱ Ps. 93. 1.

& 104. 1.

11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath :

And behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him.

12 Look on every one *that is* ^kproud, and bring him low ;

^k Isai. 2. 12.

And tread down the wicked in their place.

Dan. 4. 37.

13 Hide them in the dust together ;—and bind their faces in secret.

14 Then will I also confess unto thee

That thine own right hand can save thee.

15 Behold now ^lbehemoth, which I made with thee ;

He eateth grass as an ox.

16 Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins,

And his force *is* in the navel of his belly.

17 ^mHe moveth his tail like a cedar :

The sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

18 His bones *are as* strong pieces of brass ;

His bones *are* like bars of iron.

19 He *is* the chief of the ways of God :

He that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

20 Surely the mountains ⁿbring him forth food,

ⁿ Ps. 104. 14.

Where all the beasts of the field play.

21 He lieth under the shady trees,

In the covert of the reed, and fens.

¹ Or, *the elephant*, as some think.

² Or, *He setteth up*.

wrath, or that he can maintain his own righteousness.

7-14. He who presumes to argue with God must, like Him, be arrayed with majesty, able to reduce all creatures to subjection.

15. *behemoth*] The Hippopotamus. The word in Hebrew probably means the great beast, or the beast of beasts, that which combines in the highest degree the marvellous powers and instincts of the graminivorous animals. It has been supposed by some that the word is Egyptian.

which I made with thee] *i.e.* together with thee, or as well as thee ; both are alike My creatures.

he eateth grass as an ox] Or *herbage*. The animal feeds on roots and the rich vegetation of the land bordering on the Nile.

16. *navel of his belly*] Or *muscles of his belly*. The muscles, like roots of large plants, are enormously strong, supporting the huge paunch, and probably developed by struggles against the current.

17. *like a cedar*] The comparison, applies not to size, the animal's tail is short, but to strength or rigidity.

the sinews &c.] Render, *the sinews of his thighs are knit firmly*.

18. *His bones &c.*] Or, *his bones are as tubes of copper, his ribs are bars of iron*.

19. *chief of the ways*] The masterpiece, so to speak, of creation : an expression probably referring to the animal's unequalled strength, a point directly bearing upon the argument touching the feebleness of man.

he that made him &c.] *i.e.* by contrast, the hide of the beast is impenetrable by the sword of man : an interpretation confirmed by an inscription belonging to the time of Tothmosis III., contemporary with or earlier than Moses.

20. The meaning of this verse is probably that the herbage of whole mountains is required to supply his food, but that he does not use his immense force to drive away the cattle, who feed and even sport when he is there.

21. *the shady trees*] Or, *the lotus-trees*, the lotus silvestris, or Cyrenaica, which grows abundantly on the hot banks of the Upper Nile ; it is of moderate height, with thorny branches and fruit like plums.

- 22 The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow ;
 The willows of the brook compass him about.
 23 Behold, ¹he drinketh up a river, *and* hasteth not :
 He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.
 24 ²He taketh it with his eyes :—*his* nose pierceth through snares.

^a Ps. 104. 26.
 Isai. 27. 1.

^b Isai. 37. 29.

CHAP. 41. CANST thou draw out ^{3a}leviathan with an hook ?

Or his tongue with a cord ⁴which thou lettest down ?

2 Canst thou ^bput an hook into his nose ?

Or bore his jaw through with a thorn ?

3 Will he make many supplications unto thee ?

Will he speak soft *words* unto thee ?

4 Will he make a covenant with thee ?

Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever ?

5 Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird ?

Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens ?

6 Shall the companions make a banquet of him ?

Shall they part him among the merchants ?

7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons ?

Or his head with fish spears ?

8 Lay thine hand upon him,—remember the battle, do no more.

9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain :

¹ Heb. *he oppresseth.*

² Or, *Will any take him in his sight, or, bore his nose*

with a gin ? ch. 41. 1, 2.

³ That is, a *whale*, or, a *whirlpool*.

⁴ Heb. *which thou drownest ?*

23. *Behold &c.*] Behold, if a river ravageth, he trembleth not; he is steadfast, if the Jordan burst upon his mouth. The quiet confidence with which the heavy brute bears the rush of a formidable inundation is contrasted with the terror and flight of other beasts of prey. "Jordan" is possibly used as a generic term for a river with a rapid current and subject to sudden increase. If *the* Jordan be meant it is out of place in a description, which in all other points is singularly true to local colouring; and it has therefore been conjectured that "Jor." the Egyptian word which signifies the Nile, stood originally in the text, and was changed by a copyist into the more familiar word "Jordan."

24. The meaning is not quite certain. Some find an allusion to the ease with which the animal is captured out of the water. Others prefer an allusion to the difficulty of such capture (see marg.). The latter seems to suit the general context, which draws out the inability of man to cope with the great works of the Creator.

XLI. 1. *leviathan*] The word, which properly means a large creature, lithe, or folded, may apply to a dragon (iii. 8 note); or (Ps. civ. 26), to a whale; or, as here, to the crocodile. The name does not appear to be of Egyptian origin; but it is a curious coincidence, that the very common and well-known Egyptian name of the crocodile "Meseh" is certainly derived from a root which means "to draw out," and is used in the first verse of this description. It is common to Hebrew and Egyptian.

The marg. rendering "a whale, or a whirlpool," is curious; but by the latter word the translators probably meant a large fish, such as the sperm-whale.

The second clause should be rendered, or *fastenest thou his tongue with a cord?* literally, "sinkest his tongue in a noose?" The crocodile does not, like other saurians, thrust out its tongue, which adheres closely to the jaw.

2. The Egyptian process of fishing is exactly described. These two verses evidently imply that the huge crocodile was not, and could not, be taken. Hence it may perhaps be inferred that this passage must have been written at a very early age, since long before the time of Herodotus crocodiles were captured by the natives. There were, however, many species, and the leviathan of this chapter represents the largest and most formidable of all, probably one which no one dreamed of attacking in Job's time.

4. *a servant for ever?*] Like domesticated animals, the crocodile may be partially tamed, but cannot be put to any use. The phrase refers to Exod. xxi. 6; Deut. xv. 17.

6. *companions*] Fishermen in Egypt formed a caste, or guild. *merchants*] Lit. "Canaanites," i.e. Phœnician merchants; cp. Isai. xxiii. 8; Zech. xiv. 21; Prov. xxxi. 24.

7. The process here described is now, and has been for ages, commonly employed in taking or destroying crocodiles.

9. *the hope of him?*] Or "his hope;" the hope of man that the animal may be caught.

- Shall not *one* be cast down even at the sight of him ?
- 10 None *is* so fierce that dare stir him up :
Who then is able to stand before me ?
- 11 ^cWho hath prevented me, that I should repay him ?
^a *Whatever* is under the whole heaven is mine.
- 12 I will not conceal his parts,
Nor his power, nor his comely proportion.
- 13 Who can discover the face of his garment ?
Or who can come to him ¹with his double bridle ?
- 14 Who can open the doors of his face ?
His teeth *are* terrible round about.
- 15 *His* ²scales *are* his pride,
Shut up together *as with* a close seal.
- 16 One is so near to another,—that no air can come between them.
- 17 They are joined one to another,
They stick together, that they cannot be sundered.
- 18 By his neesings a light doth shine,
And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.
- 19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps,—and sparks of fire leap out.
- 20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke,
As out of a seething pot or caldron.
- 21 His breath kindleth coals,—and a flame goeth out of his mouth.
- 22 In *his* neck remaineth strength,
And ³sorrow is turned into joy before him.
- 23 ⁴The flakes of his flesh are joined together :
They are firm in themselves ; they cannot be moved.
- 24 His heart is as firm as a stone ;
Yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

¹ Or, *within*.

² Heb. *strong pieces of shields*.

³ Heb. *sorrow rejoiceth*.
⁴ Heb. *The fallings*.

^c Rom. 11. 35.

^a Ex. 19. 5.
Deut. 10. 14.
Ps. 24. 1.
& 50. 12.
1 Cor. 10.
26, 28.

10-12. If God's creatures are so great, what must be the terrors of His majesty ?

11. *prevented* &c.] *i.e.* made Me a debtor ; hence it follows that all God's dealings with His creatures are of pure grace, proceeding wholly and exclusively from His will : a conclusion enforced by further close observation of God's works, calculated to deepen and complete the impression already made.

13. The meaning is : **Who can lift up, as a veil, his outside covering?** *i.e.* who can detach its tough scaly covering? or come within his double bridle? *i.e.* the double row of teeth.

14. *his teeth* &c.] Or, round about his teeth is terror. As the neck of the war-horse is clothed with terror (xxxix. 19), so terror has its permanent abode in the jaw of the crocodile.

15. The scales, fitting close together, and marked by ridges like the rough banks of mountain-torrents, seem to realize the attributes of pride and grandeur.

16. *By his neesings* &c.] In allusion to the play of the sun's rays upon the spray thrown from the nostrils.

his eyes] The flashing eyes of the crocodile as it lifts its head out of the water at sunrise, produced so strong an impression upon the Egyptians, that they adopted them as the symbol of mourning, and so represented it on their monuments.

19. When the beast rises after a long submergence in the water, the breath, long suppressed, rushes out with such violence that it would seem to vomit out flames from its mouth and nostrils.

22. Rather, "On his neck dwelleth Strength : before him leapeth Horror." Horror is described with a terrible irony as exulting in the presence of its lord.

23. *The flakes of his flesh*] Even the parts, which in most animals are loose and flabby, in this brute are compact and firm.

24. *firm as a stone*] This too is an exact observation : the heart of hot-blooded animals is liable to sudden contractions and expansions, producing rapid alternations of sensations ; not so the heart of the great saurians, with whom the circulation is cold and sluggish and the physical development imperfect.

- 25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid:
By reason of breakings they purify themselves.
26 The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold:
The spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.
27 He esteemeth iron as straw,—and brass as rotten wood.
28 The arrow cannot make him flee:
Slingstones are turned with him into stubble.
29 Darts are counted as stubble:
He laugheth at the shaking of a spear.
30 ²Sharp stones are under him:
He spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.
31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot:
He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 He maketh a path to shine after him;
One would think the deep to be hoary.
33 Upon earth there is not his like,—³who is made without fear.
34 He beholdeth all high things:
He is a king over all the children of pride.

CHAP. 42. THEN Job answered the LORD, and said,

- 2 I know that thou ^acanst do every thing,
And that ^ano thought can be withholden from thee.
3 ^bWho is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?
Therefore have I uttered that I understood not;
^cThings too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak:
^dI will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear:
But now mine eye seeth thee.

^a Gen. 18. 14.
Matt. 19. 26.
Mark 10. 27.
& 14. 36.
Luke 18. 27.
^b ch. 38. 2.
^c Ps. 40. 5.
& 131. 1.
& 139. 6.
^d ch. 38. 3.
& 40. 7.

¹ Or, *breastplate*.

² Heb. *Sharp pieces of potsherd*.

³ Or, *who behave themselves without fear*.

⁴ Or, *no thought of thine can be hindered*.

25. Or, *Heroes tremble at his grandeur, they are confounded by breakings*, i.e. lose their presence of mind when he breaks the weapons which they use against him.

29. *Darts*] Or "a club."

30. Rather, *Splinters of potsherd* (i.e. sharp scales) *are under him; he spreadeth a threshing dredge on the mire*. Even the belly, in other animals smooth and unprotected, is covered with sharp-edged scales, and the impression left upon the mud-banks where he basks is that of a heavy dredge.

31. The immense size of the beast, and the impetuosity of his movement, makes the stream to seethe and heave like a caldron of boiling oil.

the sea] So the Nile was then, and is still, commonly called by Orientals.

34. *beholdeth*] i.e. coldly, sternly, without emotion.

children of pride] The same words which in xxviii. 8 are rendered "lion's whelps." Here they mean all mighty beasts of prey.

XLII. 2. This verse recognizes two attributes, omnipotence and omniscience. Job does not learn a different truth from that which he held previously, but he learns it

in a different way; he realizes it spiritually together with its consequences, and therefore no longer presumes to judge of the fitness or unfitness of any dispensation which proceeds from the Infinite and inconceivable Godhead.

3. Job refers to the opening of the Lord's address (marg. ref.). He brings it distinctly before his mind, and recognizes its justice; clear and bright as his own reasoning had seemed to be, it was but a darkening of counsel.

4-6. Again Job repeats and meditates on the words of God (marg. ref.). He confesses now that he had not really heard God's word before, i.e. received it in its full meaning; it was a mere hearing with the ear of sense. But now he sees God with the eye of the spirit, now he can see himself in his true proportions, and submits with utter humiliation of heart. This is no surrender of his righteousness; Job knows that his *relative* righteousness, sincerity of intention and singleness of heart, are recognized by God, and proved by His condescension in answering and satisfying his inward craving.

6 Wherefore I *abhor myself*,—and repent in dust and ashes.

^c Ezra 9. 8.
ch. 40. 4.

7 And it was *so*, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, as my servant Job *hath*.

^f Num. 23. 1.
^g Matt. 5. 24.

8 Therefore take unto you now ⁷seven bullocks and seven rams, and ^ggo to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall ^hpray for you: for ⁱhim will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my servant Job.

^a Gen. 20. 17.
Jam. 5. 15,
16.
¹ John 5. 16.

9 And Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted ²Job.

ⁱ Ps. 14. 7.
& 128. 1.

¶ And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD ³gave Job ^ktwice as much as he had before.

^k Isai. 40. 2.

11 Then came there unto him ^lall his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money,

¹ See ch. 19.
13.

12 and every one an earring of gold. ¶ So the LORD blessed ^mthe latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had ⁿfourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke

ⁿ ch. 8. 7.
Jam. 5. 11.
ⁿ See ch. 1.3.

13 of oxen, and a thousand she asses. ^oHe had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of

^o ch. 1. 2.

15 the third, Keren-happuch. And in all the land were no women found *so fair as the daughters of Job*: and their father gave

¹ Heb. *his face*, or, *person*,
1 Sam. 25. 35. Mal. 1. 8.

² Heb. *the face of Job*.
³ Heb. *added all that had*

been to Job unto the double.

7. *thy two friends*] Elihu is not mentioned, for reasons already assigned. The rebuke does not apply to him.

right] The difference was in the principle and intention. They spoke to defend a tenet, Job spoke to declare what he believed to be true. The errors of the honest searcher after truth are better than the partial successes of the prejudiced maintainer of received opinion. Their great fault, however, was the breach of charity.

8. *pray for you*] The highest function of the priesthood thus devolves on Job: a true type of the Mediator.

10. *turned the captivity*] A saying which among the Israelites early became proverbial for deliverance: but it may well have been one of very early origin, and familiar to other kindred races.

11. *his brethren, and all his sisters*] They had forsaken him in his adversity (xix. 13-19).

a piece of money] The word here used (*kesitah*) is far more ancient than *shekel*. It occurs only in Gen. xxxiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32.

an earring] Or nose-ring; see Gen. xxiv. 22 note.

14. The names indicate great beauty and grace both of person and character. Je-

mima, according to one derivation, means "dove" (cp. Song of Sol. i. 15). It is, however, more generally derived from *yamin*, days; and is taken to mean, pure and bright as the "day." Kezia, i.e. Cassia, sweet and gracious as the aromatic plant, best loved in the East; cp. Ps. xiv. 8. Keren-happuch, i.e. a horn or vase of pigment; used for enhancing the beauty of the eyes (Jer. iv. 30). The Semitic nomads in the representation at Benihasan bring vases of this pigment as a tribute or offering to the governor of the Egyptian province.

15. *gave them inheritance &c.*] This would have been contrary to Hebrew custom, which allowed daughters to inherit land only when there were no sons in the family (see Num. xxvii. 8).

The length of days and unexampled prosperity granted to Job should be regarded not as a compensation for sufferings, but as the outward and visible indications of divine favour, of which the future manifestation was as yet a matter of hope rather than of sure belief founded on revelation.

The following passage is appended by the LXX. to the close of the Book; it is interesting for various reasons. "It is written that he (Job) will rise again with those whom

2 ch. 5. 26. 16 them inheritance among their brethren. ¶ After this 2 lived Job
 Prov. 3. 16. an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons'
 3 Gen. 25. 8. 17 sons, *even* four generations. So Job died, *being* old, and 4 full of
 days.

the Lord raiseth." This shows the very Version that "This Book is translated from
 natural impression made by the concluding the Syriac," has some value, and may rest
 chapter. The statement also by the same on ancient tradition.

PSALMS.

INTRODUCTION.

1. No portion of the Hebrew Scriptures has transfused its spirit into the Christian Church more completely than the Book of Psalms.¹ The first Christians adopted the Psalter as the foundation and the model of their devotions, retaining its most striking characteristics for many centuries in their hymnody. It exhibits more fully and exactly than any other Book in the Old Testament the peculiar characteristics of the Israelites which attract the spiritual instinct. It represents a spiritual state singularly susceptible to religious impressions. There is no book in ancient literature which shows so wide and perfect a sympathy with man in his weakness and in his strength, in his joy and in his sufferings. Deep humility and oneness of mind with the poor are traits, which as expressed in this Book, present a direct contrast to the characteristics of Hellenic genius. The Psalmists one and all, but none so perfectly as David, to whom the Book owes its traditional title, give full expression to the yearnings of mankind. There is, moreover, throughout a combination of feelings elsewhere unknown, or imperfectly developed; a deep sense of inherent sin and unworthiness, together with a con-

sciousness of integrity in purpose and intent; a full recognition of a standard of morals and holiness, so perfect as to involve the condemnation of the sinner, yet withal full of loving trust in the mercy and grace of the lawgiver and judge: in short a true preparation for the special work of Christ.

The Book is, further, full of interest to men of every form of intellectual culture. The scholar and the poet, the philosopher and the historian, find in it ample materials for thoughtful study. Connected probably by one Psalm (Ps. xc.) with the dawn of the national life, its most important compositions belong to the period when that life was fully developed. Upon that epoch and on its productions David has set his royal seal; his character stands out in vivid portraiture, in its light and in its dark shadows; and second only to him, men of genius (Solomon, Asaph, and the Korahites) record the feelings of the best portion of the people through the varying phases of their fortunes; the splendour of the Solomonian age, the long years of vicissitudes which intervened between that period and the Babylonian Captivity, the depression and yearnings of the exiled people, and their sorrows and gladness after their partial restoration. At each period questions of permanent interest touching the destinies of man, and the relative claims of

¹ The total number of direct quotations from the Old Testament in the New is 283; of these 116 are from the Psalter.

morality and religion, are discussed, if not finally settled.

2. The general Hebrew title of the books is *Tehillim*, "praises," or *Sepher Tehillim*, "book of praises." This title fairly expresses the great characteristic of the Book, of which the supreme object is to declare the glory of God. The title by which it is designated in the New Testament (Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20), viz. *ψαλμοί*, "Psalms," or collectively, "*Psalter*," *ψαλτήριον*, is derived, through the Latin Vulgate, from the Alexandrian or Septuagint Version. It refers to the form, as a poem to be sung with a musical accompaniment, rather than to the spirit or religious character of the compositions.

3. The *Psalter*, like the *Pentateuch*, is divided into five books, each of which is distinctly marked by a doxology at the close; that at the end of the fifth differing from the others only in extent. This division is of great antiquity, certainly older than the Alexandrian Version.

Each of these five books has very distinct characteristics. The first contains 41 Psalms: 37 are assigned to David; an assignment which is in most cases sufficiently justified by internal evidence. The name *Jehovah* is used constantly, though not exclusively, throughout this book.

The second book has 31 Psalms (xlii.-lxxii.). In this book the inscriptions are remarkable for the general fulness of the historical notices. The word *Elohim* occurs so frequently as to be a marked characteristic.

The third book contains but 17 Psalms (lxxiii.-lxxxix.). Its liturgical character is marked by musical terms in the inscriptions. The

historical references are weighty and numerous. The divine names *Jehovah* and *Elohim* are used with nearly equal frequency.

The fourth book has 17 Psalms (xc.-cvi.). The name *Jehovah* is used throughout.

The fifth book contains 44 Psalms (cvii.-cl.). The last four begin each with the *Hallelujah*, and form a complete doxology. The name *Jehovah* predominates, but not to the exclusion of *Elohim*.

4. Of these Psalms the old and canonical tradition of the Hebrews assigns 73 to David, 2 to Solomon, 12 to Asaph, 12 to the sons of Korah, 1 to Ethan, and 1 to Moses: 49 are anonymous. A much later, but very prevalent, tradition assigned the whole *Psalter* to David. At present no theologians could do so without disregarding plain statements, not only in the inscriptions, but in numerous Psalms.

If the authority of the inscriptions be admitted, the question so far as regards one hundred and one Psalms is settled, but serious doubts are still entertained upon this point. It might be expected that lyrical compositions would bear some inscription designating the author,¹ and that a title once given by the author, or the first collector, would not be intentionally changed. Useful and important, however, as these inscriptions may be, they are by no means indispensable; and

¹ Each of the metrical compositions in the *Pentateuch* has some distinct notice both of the author and of the circumstances under which it was produced (see Gen. iv. 23, xlix. 1, 2; Exod. xv. 1; Deut. xxxi. 30, xxxiii. 1). Thus too in Judges, the Song of Deborah (Judg. v. 1); in Samuel, the hymn of Hannah (1 S. ii. 1); the lamentation of David (2 S. i. 17); his psalm (xxii. 1), and his last words, (ch. xxiii. 1) have special and complete inscriptions.

the authenticity or accuracy of each inscription may be fearlessly discussed without impugning the authority of Holy Writ. The variations of the inscriptions in the Septuagint and other ancient Versions sufficiently prove that they were not regarded as fixed portions of the Canon, and that they were open to conjectural emendation: on the other hand, the fact that they were to a great extent unintelligible to the writers of the LXX. is a conclusive evidence of their antiquity.

The Psalms attributed in the inscriptions to David belong severally to distinct periods in David's personal history. They have peculiarities of thought and style, which go far towards determining both the authorship, and the date.

(a) *Psalms of the first period of David's life.*

The following may be ascribed, both on the evidence of the ancient inscriptions, and on that of internal indications, to the period of his youth, or early manhood, first at the Court of Saul, then during his exile, whether in the wilderness, among the Philistines, at Gath, or Ziklag, up to the close of Saul's reign.

vii. viii. (?) xi. xii. xiii.
xvi. (?) xvii. (?) xxii. xxiii. (?)
xxxiv. xxxv. lii. liv.
lvi. lvii. lix.

The most striking characteristics in the Psalms belonging to this period, are consciousness of innocence, which continues unbroken up to his great fall: intense devotion, shown especially in absolute trust: and a strong sense of personal dignity.

These feelings again are connected with others, which appertain partly

to David's earnest and impulsive temperament, partly to an early and imperfect stage in the development of ethical and spiritual principles. The Hebrews generally felt and expressed bitter enmity towards those by whom they were harshly and unjustly treated; but by no other writer is this feeling expressed with such force and variety as by David. This is a characteristic of the Psalms in the second book, which the inscriptions assign to David's youth.

The imagery in these Psalms brings David's personality vividly before us. They abound in references to warfare; God is specially a God of battle, the Psalmist's shield, or more commonly his rock, his fortress, his stronghold, images specially connected with the dangers and escapes of David's exile. Other images belong rather to David's experience as shepherd.

In point of style, the suddenness and abruptness of the transitions, the complete predominance of feeling over external form, the elasticity of a spirit which feels every blow, yet at once recovers itself, putting forth new powers, and overcoming with little effort all impediment and opposition, these are indications of genius of the highest order in an early process of development.

(b) *Psalms of the second period, between his accession to the throne and his great sin.*

The following Psalms may be more or less confidently attributed to this period.

viii. ix. x. xv. xvi. xvii. xviii.
xix. xx. xxi. xxiii. xxiv. xxvi.
xxix. xxxvi. lviii. lx. lxxiii.
ci. cviii. cx.

Progress and development mark

David's spirit. The spirit of devotion, ever increasing in earnestness and warmth, has now a kingly character. The key-note is struck in the two Psalms (xv., xxiv.) which were recited when the Ark was transferred to Jerusalem. The great outburst of devotion comes in the xviiith Psalm, which exhausts the experience of his early manhood. As might be expected, the sense of dignity finds fuller expression at this period. The king feels that he occupies the position to which he had been called, and for which his qualifications had been tested and approved, and now for the first time recognizes the fact that it involves headship over the heathen and a vocation to be teacher of the world. There is the same feeling of burning indignation which characterized his early Psalms; it is equally strong, but less personal.

The style of this period differs to some extent from that of David's youth. In some Psalms the construction is difficult, owing chiefly to archaic forms; but, as a general rule, the flow of language is fuller and easier, the transitions less frequent and less abrupt.

(c) *Third period, from the fall of David to his flight.*

v. vi. xxxii. xxxviii. xxxix.
xl. xli. li. lv. lx. lxiv.

In this series the change comes suddenly, as suddenly as the temptation of David and his fall. One Psalm, the 51st, sets the king before us, and bares his heart in the crisis of his agony. Yet throughout, the old characteristics of devout trust in God, of consciousness of a high vocation, of generosity and unselfish patriotism, make us feel that we have the same

man, whose teaching will, like that of St. Peter (Luke xxii. 32), be henceforth more persuasive and heart-converting, full of sympathy and experimental knowledge, flowing from "a broken spirit" and "contrite heart." In no Psalm to the end of David's life do we find the early consciousness of innocence: in none is there an absence of the sustaining influence of God's free Spirit. Some Psalms (e.g. Ps. xxxii) were probably written soon after his repentance. At a still later period, others indicate the misery caused by the guilt of his children; the xxxviiith Psalm introduces a series, extending to the end of the first book, in which are represented spiritual and physical prostration, outward calamities, successful machinations of conspirators headed and guided by one arch-traitor, the confidant and bosom friend of early years.

(d) *Psalms written probably at the time of his flight, or before his restoration.*

iii. iv. xxvii. xxviii. xxxi.
lxi. lxiii. lxix. lxx. cxlii.

Of these, the lxith is probably the earliest, composed on the morning after the flight from Jerusalem: they are marked by a joyous consciousness of God's continued help and of his own salvation. The indignation against traitors, which in youth had been intensely personal, in middle age dignified and kingly, now assumes a prophetic character.

(e) *Psalms belonging to the last period of David's reign.*

To this period may probably belong those Psalms in which the didactic character predominates. In none is the identity of spirit with the

productions of youth and early manhood more conspicuous than in the cxxxixth; in none is there a more perfect development of the noblest and most spiritual elements of David's nature. Realization of God's Presence, issuing in a consciousness of his own dependence and security; a feeling, not, as in early youth, of natural innocence, or, as in mid-life, of accepted penitence, but of a heart cleansed and renewed, and a life at last clear from every wicked way; a lively appreciation of the majesty and preciousness of God's purposes manifested in His works and dealings with man: and the old ever-recurring strain of indignation and perfect hatred of the wicked, now grounded wholly on the sense of their antagonism to God—are some of the great thoughts of these Psalms.

The general result is (1) that by far the larger number of the Psalms, attributed to David in the inscriptions, bear the characteristics which are most prominent and most peculiar in those, which critics, who accept any Psalms as Davidic, unhesitatingly and unanimously ascribe to him. (2) Those characteristics are pointed out by critics in reference to Psalms about which they yet differ most hopelessly. (3) It is quite possible that some which bear the name of David underwent alterations, probably in order to adapt them to the liturgical services of the Temple, with additions suggested by the circumstances of the times; and that others may have been compiled from different Psalms. The preposition "to," or "of," or "for," in the inscription does not necessarily imply that the Psalm was actually written by the person to whose name it is prefixed. (4) It is admitted that, as a general rule, the

Psalms attributed to the youth or early manhood of David, are replete with archaic forms, obsolete words, and difficult constructions, impetuous in movement, and rapid in transitions. Yet, even in the latest Psalms, brightness and splendour of imagery, warmth and promptness of sympathy, alternating with burning indignation, show that the great Psalmist retained his character and genius unclouded to the end.

With reference to the authenticity and date of Psalms, attributed to Moses, Solomon, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Heman, and Ethan, it is admitted that in the case of many the internal evidence is probable, if not conclusive.³

A large proportion of Psalms in the last two books (Pss. xc.—cl) undoubtedly belong to the period during or following the exile.

Whether any, and, if any, what Psalms have been written in the age of the Maccabees has been sharply contested, and with an entire absence of doctrinal prepossession.

The following arguments appear on the whole conclusive against the assumption.

(1) The notice in 2 Maccabees ii. 14 states simply that Judas Maccabeus gathered together books which had been lost; there is no mention of his adding writings of his own or of his contemporaries.

(2) There are indications held to be all but conclusive, that the doxologies at the close of each of the five books of the Psalter existed when the Book of Chronicles was written (see 1 Chr. xvi. 36). That Book was completed in the 4th century B.C., and was received

³ See notes in the Commentary.

into the canon, at the latest, when the collection was made by Judas Maccabeus.

(3) There are no intimations in the books of Maccabees that any writers of that time were regarded as inspired, nor are there any traces of a national outburst of lyrical poetry.

(4) The style of those Psalms which are most confidently asserted to be Maccabean is pure, noble, dignified, differing in no respect, either in language, metrical structure, tone of thought, or variety and beauty of imagery, from the best age of Hebrew poetry. In Maccabean times the Hebrew language was seriously affected by foreign influences and internal deterioration.

It may be taken for granted that no additions or material changes were made after the collection by Judas Maccabeus, and that he handed down without alteration the documents which he collected. The collection was therefore extant, or completed, in the time of Nehemiah, when it is probable that the liturgical Psalms at the end were affixed. The last collector finally settled the form of the Psalter, adhering on the whole to previous arrangements both of the books, and of the Psalms in each book.

The *first* book was arranged substantially in its present form, soon after the accession of Solomon.

The *second* book may have been added to it soon afterwards: but the peculiar character of the inscriptions (see p. 94), and the use of the divine names, indicate a different redaction. The second book was probably arranged with a special view to recitation in the Temple, under the guidance of Solomon, or of the leaders of the Levitical

chorus.* The arrangement of the Psalms in these two books is not chronological throughout. The introductory Psalm (Ps. i) stands apart, and was perhaps written by Solomon. It is not perhaps without special purpose that this collection is set between two Psalms of kingly consecration (the iind and the lxxiind). Other Psalms (e.g. iii.-vi) may be placed where they are on the assumption that they were arranged with special reference to the Temple service. Allowing for such transpositions, we have from the viiith to the xiiiith Psalms of David's youth; from the xivth to the xxist Psalm of his early reign; while the later Psalms in the first book belong to the troublous times preceding his flight from Absalom. The Psalms in the second book may have been written within the same period.

The *third* book appears to have been collected in a later reign, not improbably in that of Jehoshaphat.

The *fourth* book was principally composed before the close of Hezekiah's reign.

The *fifth* book contains several Psalms of the age of Ezra or Nehemiah, but many also which bear the name of David. It is impossible to say from what sources the latest collector drew these Psalms, most of which have characteristics which leave little doubt of Davidic authorship.

5. In considering the Psalter in its bearings upon the development of doctrine in the Hebrew Church, three great points call for sepa-

* The notice at the end of the lxxiind Psalm distinctly marks one epoch in the formation of the Psalter. It could not have been written by the reviser of the last two books, for they contain several Psalms ascribed in the inscriptions to David.

rate consideration: (a) the ethical or spiritual teaching; (b) the aspect under which it contemplates the doctrine of retribution, a point which involves the question of a future life; (c) the direct prophecies, or typical foreshadowings and anticipations of the Messiah.

(a) In this respect the teaching of the Psalter indicates a considerable advance over the Pentateuch and the earlier Historical Books in the development of principles previously recognized, and their application to a great variety of characters and circumstances. This applies not only to the Davidic Psalms, but also to those attributed to Asaph, to the Korahites, and to those Psalmists who lived during or after the Babylonish Captivity.

Among these principles none is more striking than the due adjustment of the spiritual work, and the devotional expression, of religion. The spirit is encouraged in its highest flights of ecstatic rapture, and the devotional feelings are most intimately connected with the services of the Sanctuary. This combination comes out at once in the earliest Psalms of David (Pss. vii. xi). The inauguration of the Tabernacle on mount Zion, with all its formalities of ceremonial, is made the occasion to inculcate the fundamental principles of morality as the conditions of acceptance (Pss. xv., xxiv. notes). Throughout his Psalms David expresses intense delight in all holy seasons &c. (Pss. lxi., lxiii); but he dwells with far higher rapture upon the heavenly realities, of which these are significant adumbrations (Pss. xxxi., lxiv). This characteristic above all marks the Psalms of the Korahites, and of the chiefs of the Levitical choirs, Ethan, Heman, and Asaph, which

combine love of the Temple, and a thirst for the privileges of outward communion (see xlii. 1, 2, xliii. 3, and lxxxiv. 1, 10) with the strongest declaration of the absolute worthlessness of all ceremonial observances, though offered in accordance with the declared will of God, excepting so far as they are expressions of a heart purified by repentance, eschewing evil, and full of gratitude for spiritual grace (see l. 7-15, 23).

This fact shews the groundlessness of the assertion that there existed an antagonism between the priestly and prophetic orders.

The qualities which characterize David in great part belong to other Psalmists; such, for instance, as intense zeal, calling for the utmost severity of God's judgments against the heathen, yet with a view to the conversion of the world (lxxxii. 8, lxxxiii. 18, lxxxvii. 4-6: cp. xviii. 43, 49, notes; cxlv. 21).

The ideal man, considered apart from the realization in Christ, as portrayed by the Psalmists, has—in his dealings with God—those characteristics of faith, hope, and love, which have their true relative position in the development of the spiritual man; and in his dealings with man, he is marked by singleheartedness, transparent truthfulness, utter absence of guile, purity of heart as the centre of moral life, justice, fortitude, self-control, rectitude and sympathy. Here too, in a higher degree than before, and with a singular nearness to the Christian ideal, we remark the grace of humility; the sense of poverty and need.

The ideal is not as yet perfect; it wants such graces as the love of man extending to enemies, entire

abnegation of self-righteousness, the permanent sense of unworthiness, and above all unlimited forgiveness of injuries, the extirpation of the bitter root of hatred and revenge. Yet even for these, the most special characteristics of the Saviour's teaching, there is a preparation, a foreshadowing, which enables Christians to use the Psalter both in private and public devotions without misgiving, and with deep thankfulness for the help which it supplies to the spiritual life.

(b) The feelings and hopes of the Psalmists touching a future state. It is clear on the one hand that no distinct revelation of a future state of retribution had as yet been vouchsafed to the Israelites. The truth was indeed implicitly contained in God's manifestation of Himself as the God of Abraham and the fathers (cp. Ps. xxxix. 12, note). Still to the generality of the people the grave, or the unknown Sheol of which the grave was the entrance, bounded the region of hope and fear: few distinctly realized the state after death, as a state of consciousness, or one to be followed by restoration. The writer of the Book of Job at least felt that attempts to vindicate the righteousness of God would be futile, were it left unsolved; and the conviction sprang up that God would manifest Himself in some unknown way as the Redeemer. But the hope, as was there shewn, was after all but vague and subjective.

In the Psalter numerous passages represent the state of the departed as one of darkness; they leave an impression of a final triumph of death, of the annihilation of consciousness (cxv. 17, cxlvi. 3, 4).

But even in such Psalms occurs the expression of feelings wholly incompatible with the certainty of annihilation (see especially the latter half of Ps. cxlvi., xxxvii. 37, i. 5, xlix. 15).

It may indeed be conceded that no objective revelation had as yet been vouchsafed. What the Psalmists believed or hoped touching the future state in or after Sheol was, so far as we can judge, even to the last a subjective conviction. But we have a right to affirm touching the great bulk of the Davidic Psalms, indeed of the whole Psalter, that there are throughout indications more or less distinct, sometimes faint, sometimes singularly bright and strong, of an undercurrent of feeling in harmony with the eternal truth, and with those undying and irrepressible aspirations, which God has implanted in souls bearing His impress, and susceptible of union with Him; a union which excludes the possibility of annihilation.

There are, however, some few Psalms in which the lights diffused throughout the book are gathered up, and burn with a wondrous strength. Such especially are the xvth and xviith Psalms; these bear witness to a perfectly developed consciousness of immortality in the writer. If they belong to the Davidic age, and to the early part of David's own life, they supply conclusive evidence of the existence of a deep-rooted belief at the time of the earliest collection. Psalm xvi is Messianic: a fact which sufficiently accounts for the prominence which it gives to the thought of immortality. It is, moreover, evident that the writer was familiar with the Book of Job, and that he especially refers to

passages in that Book which deal with the great problem of life.

In the xviith Psalm, which was probably written when David was exiled from the court of Saul (see introductory note), we have a development of the same thought, which proves that even in early youth David had meditated deeply on the subject (see notes to the Ps.).

(c) While all critics concur in the general recognition of Messianic hopes expressed by the Psalmists, they differ exceedingly as to the character and extent of this element in the Book.

The Fathers saw in every Psalm distinct utterances of that Spirit. The Fathers did not, indeed, hold that the individuality of the Psalmists was altogether suppressed; but they believed that they were so overruled as to become at the same time true utterances of the Spirit of Christ. This system materially interfered with the historical interpretation, and through want of regard for the primary and literal meaning, it tended to obliterate the striking evidences of individuality in the several Psalmists, and consequently of the authenticity of the Psalms. Taking the Psalms as helps and guides to devotion, and informers of the spiritual life in Christ, they lost comparatively little and gained much in their intense realization of that Presence, Which, whether fully disclosed or dimly intimated, is the source and centre of the Psalmists' inspirations. That system was held by all the great mediæval writers, nor is it wholly abandoned, or likely to be abandoned, by those to whom critical, literary, or exegetical considerations are as nothing in comparison with Christ.

The Messianic interpretation of

each and every Psalm which claimed to be directly and exclusively predictive of Christ was received by the Hebrews long before our Lord's coming, and without any misgiving or any trace of antagonistic opinion. A belief in Messiah founded upon the prophecies, and specially upon typical or direct predictions in the Psalms, was one of the fundamentals of the faith of the Rabbins. Later, in consequence of the use which was made of it by Christians they endeavoured to explain away the application to our Lord by the theory of a double Messiah, each with characteristics, to their mind irreconcilable with the history of Jesus the son of David; the one Messiah being the visible incarnation of majesty, beauty, and might, the living Son of the living God, the image and reflection of the divine glory; the other, the descendant not of Judah, but of Joseph, smitten by God's wrath, rejected universally both by his countrymen and by the Gentiles, bearing as a scape-goat the sins and sufferings of mankind.

As to the belief of the Jews of every class in our Lord's time no doubt is entertained. The writers of the New Testament quote the Psalms in reference to the events of our Lord's history without apology or explanation; nor did the Scribes and leaders of the people ever attempt to deny their bearing on the Christ. Our Lord Himself applies them to Himself.

And that authority is to Christians paramount and conclusive. He applies, on the one hand, predictions in the Psalms to His humiliation, betrayal, agony, and death; on the other, to His divine birth, His triumph over death and hell

and His enthronement at the right hand of His Father.

Keeping this as a primary condition, we may ask other questions, (1) whether the Psalms in general are to be regarded as Messianic; (2) whether again a considerable portion have a primary reference to David and other Psalmists, and a secondary one to Christ; and (3) whether any, and, if any, what Psalms are directly and exclusively Messianic.

(1) Generally speaking, two lines of thought are discernible in the Psalms. On the one hand, there are descriptions of the divine action, which bring God ever nearer and nearer to man, pointing ever more distinctly to a crisis of personal manifestation, by which the triumph of righteousness, the extirpation of evil, and the deliverance of the upright will be accomplished: and we observe that passages, in which this manifestation is most distinctly set forth, are claimed by the writers of the New Testament as directly connected with the Person and triumph of Christ.

On the other hand, there is a correlative elevation of humanity in the Person of a Representative, bringing it nearer and nearer to God. Passing through intense suffering, contumely and oppression, the ideal Head of the Theocracy rises ever higher and higher, till He is recognized and enthroned as God's own Son on earth, and finally seated for ever in the fulness of divine glory on the right hand of God in heaven.

Wherever either of these two great lines of thought are discerned, and they run as a stream of light through the book, we have essential characteristics of Messianic inspiration.

These characteristics are "not, however, equally clear in all.

There are many Psalms in which no rational exegesis, at once candid and reverent, can find traces of Messianic prophecy: the principle may be there, but it is, so to speak, latent, wholly undeveloped. All these Psalms ought to be interpreted without any attempt at what is called spiritual or mystic interpretation.

We have in the next place many Psalms quoted in the New Testament in connexion with Christ, containing strong indications of Messianic ideas; and yet full also of a strongly marked individuality. In such Psalms as the xviiiith, referring either to David or to Solomon in their kingly power, characteristics are blended which are wholly inapplicable to a human sovereign. In the exegesis of such Psalms it is clearly right in the first place to bring out into full light every trace of the individual; and then the features which are evidently ideal or typical. The more natural and simple the interpretation is, the better it will help us to do justice to the higher spiritual bearings.

Even more important is this principle when applied to the greater number of Psalms composed subsequently to David's great fall. In these Psalms we feel on the one hand the Presence of the Atoner, of Him Who bears and makes His own the very agony of His sinful creatures. On the other hand the movements are undoubtedly David's own: the innumerable sins which he deplors are his own sins; the shame, the bitterness, the unspeakable anguish are altogether his own; at once the due and inevitable punishment, and the only

rentedly, for his guilt. In the interpretation of all these Psalms we hold fast to the literal interpretation; and at the same time admit that the Hebrews were guided by a sure instinct, when they held that, even in this period of his life, David bore sufferings which were typical of those of the Messiah.

There are Psalms however which go much further, in which a near approximation is made to the portraiture of One perfectly innocent, yet bearing chastisement due only to sin; and on the other hand having traits of majesty and spiritual dignity not less mysterious. These Psalms would be recognized without hesitation as Messianic, were it not for the equally strong traces of personal feelings elicited, and sufficiently explained, by temporary circumstances.

In certain Psalms there is direct and exclusive reference to Christ. In such Psalms as Pss. xxii. xlv. cx—for the Messianic character of which we have authoritative declarations in the New Testament, and in which also there is the strongest internal evidence;—we have Christ set before us in the two opposite, and, but for the light of revelation, irreconcilable, aspects, the one of deepest humiliation, the other of

divine glory; we have also the convergence of the two currents, one bringing God ever nearer to man, the other raising man in the person of his Representative and Head to the right hand of God.

Such, in broad outline, appears to be the Christology of the Psalter; bearing throughout a reference to the ultimate purpose of God, for which both the sufferings and preservation of His faithful servants were preparatory; in a considerable portion bringing into light the characteristics of the Saviour both in His humiliation and triumph, and setting forth all the graces of His human nature in combination with the attributes of God.

The Psalter emptied of Christ would still be a collection of lyric poems of admirable beauty, breathing a pure and lofty devotion, representing in vivid colours the events and persons of the most remarkable people in the world's history. It would retain its position among the noblest and most interesting products of human genius. But to the Christian, as such, it would have no voice, no meaning; losing its highest and most distinctive characteristic it would forfeit its claims upon his reverence and love.

APPENDIX.

THE metrical structure of the Psalms has important bearings upon the exegesis, and especially upon questions touching their date and origin; and although it cannot be regarded as definitely settled in many cases, yet enough can be ascertained to suggest valuable results.

The first peculiarity which strikes the attentive reader of the Psalms, as contrasted with the lyrical productions of

other nations, is the subordination of the outer form to the inner sense. In the separate verses, and in the strophes, there are indications of law influencing the form; but that law, at once vigorous and flexible, adapts itself readily to the movements of the spirit. This may be regarded as a result of the deeper consciousness of the special and loftiest aim of poetry, bringing the spirit into contact with the divine: and it certainly

constitutes the most important and the most distinctly marked characteristic of Hebrew Psalmody.

Ancient Hebrew poetry has no metres regulated by the numbers or quantities of syllables.¹

It has however a very complete metrical system regulated by the grouping of thoughts. This applies both to the structure of verses, and to the structure of the groups of verses, for which the name strophe, though but partially applicable, is now generally adopted.

The simplest and the commonest form of the rhythmical structure of separate verses is the distich. Each verse consists of two equally balanced clauses:—

(a) Sometimes expressing the same thought under different forms; *e.g.*—

His delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law will he exercise himself day and night.

(b) Or the second clause being antithetical:

The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

(c) Or the second clause draws out the consequences or results of the first:

Good and upright is the Lord:
Therefore will He teach sinners in the way.

This is, in fact, the earliest known form of metre. It exists in extremely ancient specimens of Egyptian poetry, and occurs frequently in the Pentateuch and in poems which belong to the age between Moses and David.

In these distichs a verse of two clauses contains upon an average from six to eight words: but the Hebrew poets while fully conscious of the charm of rhythmical cadence, departed from the general rule in various directions.

Most common is the elongation of either or of both divisions of a verse, so that the whole may consist of three, four, five, and at the utmost six clauses. Still even then the general law of division into two portions is recognized. As a general rule, the tristich has in one division two clauses balancing one clause in the other. Tetrastichs are common, but generally consist of two closely connected distichs (either syno-

nymous, or antithetic, or synthetic); sometimes of a tristich and monostich. The pentastich consists generally of two distichs and a monostich—*e.g.* xxxix. 12.

It is not necessary to dwell at any length upon the laws of parallelism; they have been long recognized, nor has any considerable light been thrown upon them by late investigations.

It is, however, a question far more difficult, and as yet but partially settled, when it is inquired, first, whether Hebrew poetry has strophes in the proper sense of the word; and, secondly, assuming them to exist, under what forms or rules they may be classified.

The process first adopted and worked out with great skill by Köster rests on clear and satisfactory principles.

In every poem there are certain points of rest or transition distinctly marked. In Hebrew they are generally marked either by a change of persons, or by ejaculations, or by certain forms of expression which introduce or close a subject. These principal divisions are, moreover, commonly divided into subordinate paragraphs, in which the pauses and transitions are more or less clearly indicated by the construction or by turns of thought.

In some Psalms the divisions are absolutely determined by the recurrence of ejaculatory refrains.

In many the word "Selah" affords valuable help, though it cannot always be depended upon.² In twenty-eight Psalms Selah marks either all the divisions or the most important divisions.

A considerable number of the Psalms fall at once into equal groups, which are now commonly designated strophes. They correspond to stanzas, or verses, in our metrical Psalms.

In at least nine Psalms the strophes

¹ Rhyme is found occasionally, yet evidently without a system, in Psalms expressing mental emotion, *e.g.* cvi. 4-7: cp. Jer. iii. 21-25.

² It is noticeable that the word Selah does not occur in the last two books of Psalms, excepting in Pss. cxl. and cxliii., both of which are ascribed to David. It may be inferred that it was not used as a musical note, perhaps it was not understood, at a late period. Disappearing probably with the cessation of the Temple-services during the Captivity, it occurs for the last time in Habakkuk. The meaning "pause" is most natural, but the etymology is wholly uncertain.

consist each of two verses (*e.g.* iii. iv. xii. xxiv. xxxii).

Not less common are strophes each of three verses (Ps. i). When the strophes contain more than three verses, they are in fact only combinations of smaller strophes; thus Ps. lx. consists of three strophes each of four verses, or double distichs. But these equal strophes are sometimes interrupted by verses which form a refrain (as in Ps. xlv. where the first strophe is marked by *Selah*, but the second and third have the refrain, "the Lord of Hosts is with us"); or mark the prelude and close, or both prelude and close, of a Psalm.

A vast number of Psalms remain which do not come under this classification; in which the groups of verses determined by the logical coherence are of unequal length.

(a) We have Psalms in which strophes of unequal length are arranged symmetrically in parallel groups (see Pss. vi. xlv. xlvii. xlviii).

Some of the most interesting and artistic combinations occur in the Korahite Psalms, especially in those attributed to Asaph; they belong apparently to the period in which the art of Psalmody attained its full development. The arrangement of the groups may have been determined to some extent by the position or movements of the Levitical choirs and of their leaders; in many cases the words spoken either by the High Priest or the chief musician are marked very distinctly, in others, the antiphonal responses are unmistakable. And in Psalms attributed to David's earliest life, the preceding forms are found, evidently elaborated with full consciousness of their character. See remarks on Ps. xxxv.

(b) There are, however, other Psalms in which the indications of systematic arrangement are unmistakable; but in

which the strophes are neither equal, nor symmetrically responding to each other. The increase or decrease in every case is determined by an inner law, such as the abundance of subject-matter, or by the overflowing feeling of the Psalmist (Ps. xviii.; see also Ps. xlv). This arrangement affects some of the Psalms which are most perfect in tone of thought, in sublimity and beauty of imagery, and in artistic construction.

(c) Lastly, there are undoubtedly Psalms, like the dithyrambic poems of Greece, in which the outer form is wholly irregular; the division of the strophes being determined by some inner principle, or it may be by outward circumstances, of which no satisfactory account can be given. Some few belong to the best age of Hebrew poetry: as for instance the twenty-first, which is a dithyrambic pæan. The generality of these Psalms appear to be products of a later age; they are found, with exceedingly few exceptions, in the last part of the Psalter.

The only Psalms in which the thoughts of the poet occur without any progressive movement, and with little, if any, internal connexion, are those which are called alphabetic. They are generally of a didactic character. In these, each verse, sometimes each clause of a verse, begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in regular order. Some of the alphabetical Psalms have striking irregularities. Thus in Pss. ix. and x. forming parts of one composition, some letters are omitted altogether, others occur at irregular intervals. These irregularities as a whole proceeded from the writers themselves, who availed themselves of the alphabetic form only as a light bond, but never followed it servilely. Taken by itself, this alphabetic order is no proof of a later age.

*THE BOOK OF P S A L M S.

* Luke 20. 42.

Acts 1. 20.

^a Prov. 4.

14, 15.

^b Ps. 26. 4.

Jer. 15. 17.

^c Ps. 119. 35,

47, 92.

^d Josh. 1. 8.

Ps. 119. 1,

97.

^e Jer. 17. 8.

Ezek. 47. 12.

^f Ps. 128. 2.

Isai. 3. 10.

^g Job 21. 18.

Ps. 35. 5.

Isai. 17. 13.

& 29. 5.

Hos. 13. 3.

PSALM I.

1 BLESSED ^ais the man that walketh not in the counsel of the

¹ungodly,

Nor standeth in the way of sinners,

^bNor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But ^chis delight ^{is} in the law of the LORD;

^dAnd in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree ^eplanted by the rivers of water,

That bringeth forth his fruit in his season;

His leaf also shall not ²wither;

And whatsoever he doeth shall ^fprosper.

4 The ungodly ^{are} not so:

But ^{are} ^glike the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

¹ Or, *wicked*.

² Heb. *fade*.

I. This forms a concise introduction to the Psalter, showing the general objects and principles of the writers. "Some say it is, so to speak, the preface of the Holy Spirit" (Jerome). Hence in the New Testament (Acts xiii. 33, according to some MSS.), and by many Fathers, the second Psalm is quoted as the first. The date and authorship are uncertain; it has no inscription; some peculiarities of language, and the general tone of thought, point to Solomon.

The Psalm is divided into two portions, each of three verses.

1. Three kinds of wickedness are described; active participation in evil counsels, quiet acquiescence in sin, association with scoffers. Abstinence from all forms of sin constitutes the negative characteristic of the godly man.

the ungodly] The Hebrew word here and in v. 6 is generally rendered *wicked*, as in the margin. It is a word applied only to utterly ungodly men, never to frail, or even sinful, believers (cp. xxxii. 5 note, Job xxi. 16),

scornful] Cp. Prov. i. 22, iii. 34, xiii. 1. The word appears to be Solomonic: it does not occur elsewhere in the Psalter.

2. *his delight*] The positive characteristic of the godly man. The heart does not merely submit to God's Law, but delights in it. That Law includes all revelations of God's will, whether outward as in the Sinaitic code, or inward as written on the heart. Cp. xix. 8, 10, cxix. 35; Rom. vii. 22.

meditate] Inward meditation; the thought of God is, as it were, the very breath of the

spiritual man: consciously or unconsciously the movements of the inner man are continuously under the influence of God's will. Cp. lxiii. 6, lxxvii. 12 and marg. ref.

3. *like a tree*] Not the oleander, a beautiful evergreen, with bright red blossoms and dark green leaves; this shrub needs no cultivation, and it bears no edible fruit; but the palm-tree, a tree conspicuous for its beauty, indicating the presence of water; bearing precious fruit, and a recognized emblem of the righteous man (xcii. 12, 13).

planted] The word is used properly of the scion of a tree severed from its parent trunk and planted in a spot where it may be carefully tended. Cp. marg. ref.; Num. xxiv. 6 (the first passage in which the simile occurs); Job xiv. 9, xxix. 19.

rivers of water] Rather *streams of water*, water running in channels for irrigation. Cp. Rev. xxii. 2. The expression appears more specially applicable to royal gardens carefully irrigated and planted with choice trees (cp. Eccles. ii. 5, 6).

he doeth] The word in Hebrew applies equally to the production of fruit; "whatsoever it produces;" and such is probably its meaning here (see Jer. xvii. 8).

shall prosper] Or, "He shall make it prosper." See Gen. xxxix. 23.

5. *shall not stand*] Or, "not rise up." They will be cast down, unable to stand in the presence of their Judge. Cp. v. 5, lxxvi. 7; Mal. iii. 2; Luke xxi. 36.

congregation] In the Pentateuch this word is used repeatedly of the congregation of Israel. The passage is taken by some com-

6 For ¹the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous:
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM II.

- 1 WHY^a do the heathen ¹rage,
And the people ²imagine a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD, and against his ^banointed, *saying*,
3 Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh:
The Lord shall have them in derision.
5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,
And ³vex them in his sore displeasure.
6 Yet have I ⁴set my king—⁵upon my holy hill of Zion.
7 I will declare ⁶the decree:
The LORD hath said unto me, ⁷Thou art my Son;

¹ Or, tumultuously assemble.

³ Or, trouble.

of my holiness.
⁶ Or, for a decree.

² Heb. meditate.

⁴ Heb. anointed.

⁵ Heb. upon Zion, the hill

^a Ps. 37. 18.
Nah. 1. 7.
John 10. 14.
2 Tim. 2. 19.

^a Ps. 46. 6.
Acts 4. 25,
26.

^b Ps. 45. 7.
John 1. 41.
^c Jer. 5. 5.
Luke 10. 14.
^d Ps. 11. 4.
^e Ps. 37. 13.
& 59. 8.
Prov. 1. 26.

^f 2 Sam. 5. 7.

^g Acts 13. 33.

mentators to mean simply that sinners will not be permitted to remain partakers of the privileges of the National Church; but the preceding clause, and the whole tenour of the context, point to the day of judgment, when the righteous will be completely and finally separated from evil-doers.

Some consider that the first and the second Psalms are placed at the head of the Psalter because they present at once the two fundamental doctrines of the Hebrew Church, the judgment of God, and His Messiah.

6. *knoweth*] God's knowledge implies approval and love of those who strive to obey Him. Cp. marg. ref.

II. In the New Testament the Psalm is referred to repeatedly as Messianic (Acts iv. 25, xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; Matt. xxvi. 63; John i. 49): so that no doubt can remain that in early days, before the Christian era, the Psalm was regarded as Messianic. The ancient Jewish commentators also describe the Messianic interpretation of this Psalm as common. Modern Jewish commentators deny it, and interpret the Psalm of David exclusively. But any attempt to explain it in reference to David, Solomon, Zerubbabel, or the Maccabees, is unsatisfactory. The words of the Psalm are too great, its tone is too lofty, for any such application.

The early Christians (Acts iv. 25) ascribe the authorship of the Psalm to David. Its place in the collection, its similarity to Ps. cx., its vigour, sublimity, and insight, fall in with this teaching of Scripture and tradition. Others attribute it to Solomon; to Hezekiah; to Isaiah, or his times; but, as it would seem, on slight grounds.

The application of the Psalm is generally to Christ's triumph over His enemies, and to the establishment of His universal Empire.

1. *imagine*] The marg. reads "meditate," which seems better (see i. 2 note). This word, as well as the word "rage," describes not action, but purpose.

a vain thing] i.e. a purpose which is nought, and will come to nought.

The Psalmist, whose eyes are opened to the sight of Jehovah and Messiah, and to the comprehension of Their might, knows that all attempts against Them are vain.

2. *set themselves*] i.e. in posture of defiance (cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 16). The word "Messiah," rendered here "anointed," is commonly used of the theocratic King (1 Sam. ii. 10, xxiv. 6, 10; 2 Sam. i. 14, xix. 21); also of Cyrus (Isai. xlv. 1). The context shows that it is used here in a special sense.

3. The words of the rebellious kings; "their bands," i.e. the bands of Jehovah and Messiah. This image of "bands" and "cords" comes from the image of yoked oxen eager to cast off the yoke (Isai. x. 27; Jer. xxx. 8) transferred to prisoners in captivity (cvii. 14).

4. *shall laugh* &c.] The action is rather present; Jehovah laughs, the Lord (Adonai) scoffs at their vain enterprise: but

5. *Then*] Or, "presently." When the fit time has come, in the midst of their vain-glorious boasting, He speaks and acts.

6. What Jehovah speaks. Lit. "And as for Me, I have set My king upon My holy mountain:" the emphasis is upon the pronoun. Zion is put for the seat and centre of Messiah's dominion. Some render the words as in the margin. Either rendering suits the Messianic exposition of the Psalm equally well.

7-9. Messiah, without preface, takes up the word of Jehovah. "I will tell," He

- * Ps. 22. 27.
 & 80. 27.
 Dan. 7. 13.
 See John
 17. 4, 5.
 * Ps. 89. 23.
 Rev. 2. 27.
 & 12. 5.
 & 19. 15.
 * Heb. 12. 28.
 " " 2. 12.
 * Gen. 41. 40.
 John 5. 23.
 * Rev. 6. 16,
 17.
 * Ps. 34. 8.
 Prov. 16. 20.
 Isai. 30. 18.
 Jer. 17. 7.
 Rom. 9. 33.
 1 Pet. 2. 6.
 * 2 Sam. 15.
 18.
 * 2 Sam. 15.
 12.
 & 16. 15.
 * 2 Sam. 16. 8.
 Ps. 71. 11.
- This day have I begotten thee.
 8 *Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen for thine inheritance,
 And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
 9 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;
 Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings :
 Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
 11 *Serve the LORD with fear,—and rejoice 'with trembling.
 12 "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
 And ye perish from the way,
 When "his wrath is kindled but a little.
 *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

PSALM III.

A Psalm of David, *when he fled from Absalom his son.

- 1 LORD, "how are they increased that trouble me !
 Many are they that rise up against me.
 2 Many *there be* which say of my soul,
 *There is no help for him in God. Selah.

says, "of a decree, an eternal, immutable decree, by which I reign. Jehovah said unto Me, Thou art My Son ; not as all the Israelites (Ex. iv. 22, 23 ; Deut. xiv. 1) are sons, or as any king of Israel is a son ; but My only Son, the Inheritor of My sovereign dominion (cp. Heb. i. 5.) This day have I given to Thee, not existence, but a new existence, a new career, a throne of the world, and of all that is, or will be, in it."

This day What day ? The day when the promised dominion over the world began (Acts xiii. 33 ; Rom. i. 4) ; or generally, the day on which Christ commenced the work, which issued in His everlasting dominion. The word translated "to beget" is in Hebrew used of either parent. It more strictly belongs to the mother, and denotes the act of bringing forth. It is thence somewhat loosely transferred to the father, and signifies "to have a child born"—"to become the father of a living child." Applied to God, in His Parental relation, it would denote "to raise to life," or "to bring forth into life." Some interpret "this Day" as that day on which Christ was raised from the womb of the earth, the firstborn from the dead (Col. i. 18), and received the incommunicable prerogative of being heir of all things (Heb. i. 2).

9. The "rod" or sceptre of authority (cx. 2) shall be "of iron," to destroy and dash them into pieces, like a potter's vessel that cannot be mended (Jer. xix. 11). Similar descriptions of the ultimate fate of rebels proceed out of the lips of Christ Himself (Matt. xxiv. 51) ; and the image of this verse is often employed in Rev. (see marg. refl.) to describe that fate.

10-12. Address of the Psalmist, who has heard the words of Jehovah and His Son.

12. *Kiss the Son* Lit. "A son." The kiss was a token of homage (1 Sam. x. 1 ; 1 K.

xix. 18). The word rendered "Son" is unusual in this sense : it occurs three times in Prov. xxxi. 2. The Versions (LXX., Vulg., Targum &c.) render as if the reading were different, or the word had a different import (e.g. "learn discipline," "receive instruction.") With the A. V. agree the Syriac Version and many commentators. No explanation is free from difficulties. The phrase seems emphatic and poetical. The absence of the article in the original is emphatic. "A Son," as if none could doubt what Son and Whose Son is intended. So v. 7, "a decree," as if none could doubt what decree. If this translation be adopted, the subject throughout vv. 11, 12, is the Son : it is He that may be angry ; it is His wrath that may suddenly, or, for an instant, kindle ; they are blessed that take refuge in Him.

The last verse of the Psalm relieves the severity of vv. 9-11.

III. This is the first Psalm which is ascribed by the title to David, and the only one in this book which is expressly assigned to the period of his flight from Absalom. He composed it shortly before his restoration.

The structure is regular, of four divisions ; three are distinctly marked by Selah, the other by the ejaculation (v. 7). From v. 5 it is inferred that it was composed for a morning song : just as Ps. iv. is an evening song (cp. iv. 8). The Hebrew word for Psalm in the inscription, and the frequent use of the musical term Selah, may imply that it was used in the liturgical services of the Temple.

1. *increased* Cp. marg. refl.

2. The word "soul" has a special emphasis in this and similar passages. David's soul is the object against which attacks are aimed, and which feels the bitterness of the reproach, knowing that his own sin had

- 3 But thou, O LORD, *art* ^aa shield ¹for me;
My glory, and ^athe lifter up of mine head.
- 4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice,
And ^ahe heard me out of his ^hholy hill. Selah.
- 5 ^aI laid me down and slept;
I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.
- 6 ^aI will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,
That have set *themselves* against me round about.
- 7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God:
^aFor thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone;
Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.
- 8 ^aSalvation *belongeth* unto the LORD:
Thy blessing *is* upon thy people. Selah.

^a Gen. 15. 1.
Ps. 28. 7.
& 119. 114.
^a Ps. 27. 6.
^a Ps. 34. 4.
J Ps. 43. 3.
& 99. 9.
^a Lev. 26. 6.
Ps. 4. 8.
Prov. 3. 24.
^a Ps. 27. 3.

^a Job. 16. 10.
& 29. 17.
Ps. 55. 6.
Lam. 3. 30.
^a Prov. 21. 31.
Isai. 43. 11.
Jer. 3. 23.
Hos. 13. 4.
Jonah 2. 9.
Rev. 7. 10.

PSALM IV.

To the ²chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David.

- 1 HEAR me, when I call, O God of my righteousness:
Thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress;
³Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
- 2 O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame?
How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.
- 3 But know that ^athe LORD hath set apart him that is godly for
himself:
The LORD will hear when I call unto him.

¹ Or, about.

Or, overseer, Hab. 3. 19.

³ Or, be gracious unto me.

given occasion to the calamity (cp. Ps. lxxi. 10).

help] Better, "salvation," including deliverance from all evils, spiritual or temporal.

Selah] A musical term, probably for a sweep of harp-strings, marking a pause. See *Introd.* p. 104, n. 2.

³. *a shield for me*] Better, **about me**, as in the margin. This metaphor is appropriate in the mouth of David. The hero accustomed to battle and victory lived and breathed in warlike thoughts and associations (cp. v. 6.)

⁴. *I cried &c.*] An expression understood to mean, "I cry out incessantly in my trouble."

his holy hill] Zion (cp. ii. 6).

⁵. The word "I" is emphatic. "I for my part," as though contrasting his feelings of trust and peace with those of others less confident of salvation in God.

sustained] Rather, **sustaineth**: the change of tense marks the sense of an abiding support.

⁶. *set themselves*] Or, "arrayed themselves:" a military term (cp. Isai. xxii. 7).

⁷. Cp. Num. x. 35.

cheek bone] The jaw. David's enemies are compared to wild beasts; no doubt with reference to his own early experience. See xxiii. 1, and 1 Sam. xvii. 34-36.

⁸. *thy blessing is*] Or, "Let thy blessing be upon Thy people." David's love is not quenched by the revolt of his people: though misled, they are to him still God's people: cp. the close of Ps. xxviii.

IV. An evening Psalm (v. 8), perhaps composed on the evening of the same day as Ps. iii: its expressions being quite compatible with the period of David's flight from Absalom. The Psalm contains exhortations to his followers, such as they specially needed at that time of trial.

Neginoth] The word denotes an accompaniment of stringed instruments.

¹. *God of my righteousness*] i.e. "From Whom my righteousness comes," Who makes me upright, and Who will justify me. Cp. Isai. liv. 17; Jer. xxiii. 6.

hast enlarged me] Or, "hast made room for me" (Gen. xxvi. 22; Ps. xviii. 36). A common salutation in Arabic is "space (the same word) and ease to thee."

². *sons of men*] The Hebrew idiom is equivalent to "sirs." There may be a touch of irony, the persons so addressed were men of birth and station, but men of the world in mind and feeling. The admonition was needed hardly less by Joab, Abishai, and others of David's own party, than by Absalom's followers (cp. 2 Sam. xix. 5-7).

my glory into shame] A different reading was followed by the LXX., "How long will ye be heavy, i.e. stubborn in heart?" *leasing*] Or, "falsehood;" the characteristic of the conspirators (see 2 Sam. xv. 1-9).

³. The term "godly" is the technical designation of the pious, and equivalent to "saints" in the New Testament. Some follow the LXX. rendering, "He hath done marvellously to His godly one."

- b Eph. 4, 26. 4 ^bStand in awe, and sin not:
 c Ps. 77. 6. 'Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.
 2 Cor. 13. 5. Selah.
 d 2 Sam. 15. 5 Offer ^dthe sacrifices of righteousness,
 12. And ^eput your trust in the LORD.
 e Ps. 37. 3. 6 *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?*
 & 62. 8. 'LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
 f Ps. 119. 135. 7 Thou hast put ^ggladness in my heart,
 g Isai. 9. 3. More than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.
 h Job 11. 18, 8 ^hI will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:
 19. 'For thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.
 Ps. 3. 5.
 i Lev. 25. 18,
 19.
 & 26. 5.
 Deut. 12. 10.

PSALM V.

To the chief Musician on Nehiloth, A Psalm of David.

- a Ps. 3. 4. 1 GIVE ear to my words, O LORD,—consider my meditation.
 b Ps. 65. 2. 2 Harken unto the ^avoice of my cry, my King, and my God:
 c Ps. 30. 5. For ^bunto thee will I pray.
 & 88. 13. 3 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD;
 & 130. 6. In the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will look up.
 d Hab. 1. 13. 4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness:
 Neither shall evil dwell with thee.
 e Rev. 21. 8. 5 'The foolish shall not stand ¹in thy sight:
 f Ps. 55. 23. Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
 6 'Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing:
 'The LORD will abhor ²the bloody and deceitful man.
 7 But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy:

¹ Heb. *before thine eyes*.² Heb. *the man of bloods and deceit*.

4. *Stand in awe*] Or, "tremble." The translation of the LXX. and Vulg. "be ye angry," appears to be accepted by St. Paul (marg. ref.). In either case it may be taken as an exhortation to the followers of David, who needed greatly the warning against presumption and fierceness.

5. *sacrifices of righteousness*] Religious services in general (see l. 14, li. 19; Deut. xxxiii. 19). David's followers could not offer the legal sacrifices in exile.

6. *many*] Specially the discouraged and desponding adherents of David.

lift thou up] Cp. the blessing to be pronounced by Aaron and his sons (Num. vi. 24-26); see also xxxi. 16, and the refrain of lxxx. 3, 7, 19.

7. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 12, 28. David's enemies have the material, he has the spiritual, privileges of God's people. The mention of corn and wine may possibly indicate the season of David's flight, which was in early autumn (2 Sam. xvi. 1, xvii. 19).

V. This Psalm was composed at Jerusalem (v. 7); and probably a short time before the open revolt of Absalom (v. 6). Like Ps. iii. it is a morning song (v. 3). The style is thoroughly Davidic, concise, vigorous, with rapid transitions of thought and feeling. The Psalm is divided into four parts, each consisting of six lines, or three complete metres.

on Nehiloth] Rather, "to Nehiloth:" probably an accompaniment of flutes.

1. *meditation*] The word occurs but twice, here and in xxxix. 3. It signifies gentle, half-inward utterance, a thought inwardly clothed in words, and softly uttered.

2. *my King*] The expression has a special suitableness in the mouth of the earthly representative of the King of kings (lxxxiv. 3.) It is used specifically of God as the King of the Theocracy (x. 16).

3. *will I direct*] Or, *will I set in order*. The Hebrew word is used specially of laying the wood, or the limbs of victims, on the altar. Prayer is thus represented as a spiritual sacrifice, to be offered with careful preparation.

will look up] Or, *look out*, as a watchman, or sentinel. It represents the Psalmist as watching in spirit the ascent of the prayer, an acceptable sacrifice, and expecting the answer.

5. *foolish*] Or, "empty boasters." *workers of iniquity*] Men who make evil their business or trade.

6. *bloody and deceitful man*] Probably Ahithophel.

7. *thy house*] The Tabernacle (Josh. vi. 24; 2 Sam. xii. 20). The word rendered "temple" is also applied to the Tabernacle (1 Sam. i. 9 note, iii. 3). At a later period it is used

- And in thy fear will I worship ^otoward ¹thy holy temple.*
- 8 ^aLead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of ²mine enemies;
^aMake thy way straight before my face.
- 9 For *there is* no ³faithfulness ⁴in their mouth;
 Their inward part *is* ⁵very wickedness;
⁶Their throat *is* an open sepulchre;
⁷They flatter with their tongue.
- 10 ⁸Destroy thou them, O God;
⁹Let them fall ⁷by their own counsels;
 Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions;
 For they have rebelled against thee.
- 11 But let all those that put their trust in thee ^arejoice:
 Let them ever shout for joy, because ^bthou defendest them:
 Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.
- 12 For thou, LORD, ^cwilt bless the righteous;
 With favour wilt thou ^dcompass him as *with* a shield.

^o 1 K. 8. 29,
 30, 35, 38.
^a Ps. 28. 2.
 & 132. 7.
 & 138. 2.
^b Ps. 25. 5.
^c Ps. 25. 4.
 & 27. 11.
^d Luke 11. 44.
 Rom. 3. 13.
^e Ps. 62. 4.

^m 2 Sam. 15.
 31.

ⁿ Isai. 65. 13.

^o Ps. 115. 13.

PSALM VI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth ¹ upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 12.

title.

^a Ps. 38. 1.

Jer. 10. 24.

& 46. 28.

^b Ps. 41. 4.

^c Hcs. 6. 1.

^d Ps. 90. 13.

- 1 O ^aLORD, rebuke me not in thine anger,
 Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
- 2 ^bHave mercy upon me, O LORD; for I *am* weak:
 O LORD, ^cheal me; for my bones are vexed.
- 3 My soul is also sore vexed:—but thou, O LORD, ^dhow long?
- 1 Heb. *the temple of thy holiness*.
 2 Heb. *those which observe me*, Ps. 27. 11.
 3 Or, *steadfastness*.
 4 Heb. *in his mouth, that is, in the mouth of any of them*.
 5 Heb. *wickednesses*.
 6 Or, *Make them guilty*.
 7 Or, *from their counsels*.
 8 Heb. *thou coverest over, or, protectest them*.
 9 Heb. *crown him*.
 1 Or, *upon the eighth*: See 1 Chr. 15. 21.

specially of the Priests' court in the Temple, and very frequently of the Temple itself. It means properly a Palace; the abode of the great King, an expression equally applicable to the Tabernacle. Ps. xxvii. v. 4 compared with v. 6 shews that Tabernacle and Temple were convertible terms.

9. *faithfulness*] Or, "trustworthiness;" the firm principle on which one can rely.

wickedness] The Hebrew word means a yawning abyss, hence, destruction, or, as a characteristic of an evil man, malice: beneath the fair show of duty there is a fathomless depth of malice. The word occurs only in Job, Prov., and Psalms. In Arabic it is used specially of hell.

they flatter with their tongue] Or, **they make their tongue smooth**. The image appears to be taken from a serpent. Its prey slips over the smooth tongue. Cp. Prov. xxviii. 23.

10. *Destroy thou them*] Lit. **Declare them guilty**. Punishment follows of course, but is not expressed.

by their own counsels] As a direct result of their own machinations. The marginal rendering, i.e. "let their counsels be frustrated," is preferred by some. For the fulfilment see 2 Sam. xvii. 23.

11. *because thou defendest them*] Or, **and do thou shelter them**. The shelter may refer to a tent, or to overhanging wings.

12. *compass him*] i.e. Surround, as with the large shield which covered the whole body.

VI. This is the first of the penitential Psalms. It was composed in a season of extreme depression, probably when the Psalmist was dangerously sick, and receiving accounts which made him anticipate an open outbreak of rebellion on the part of Absalom (see 2 Sam. xv. 1-6). The sickness is undoubtedly regarded by the Psalmist as part of the chastisement due to the great crime, which brought disgrace and misery upon his latter years.

Neginoth] See Ps. iv. Introduction.

Sheminith] See margin. Upon the eighth or "octave" probably means with a bass voice or accompaniment.

1. LORD] David uses the name Jehovah exclusively in this Psalm. He has no hope but in the grace of which that name is a pledge.

"Rebuke," "anger," "chasten," "displeasure"—each word involves an acknowledgment of deep guilt.

2. *weak*] The word implies exhaustion, a drooping as of a blighted plant.

my bones] As in Job (iv. 14), this denotes a disease penetrating the whole frame, and causing excruciating anguish.

3. The soul, conscious of guilt, suffers exceedingly. "Vexed," in this and in the preceding verse, scarcely expresses the force

4 Return, O LORD, deliver my soul :

Oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

* Ps. 30. 9.

& 88. 11.

& 115. 17.

& 118. 17.

Isai. 38. 18.

5 For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee :

In the grave who shall give thee thanks ?

6 I am weary with my groaning ;

¹All the night make I my bed to swim ;

I water my couch with my tears.

/ Ps. 38. 10.

& 68. 9.

Lam. 5. 17.

* Ps. 119. 115.

Matt. 7. 23.

& 25. 41.

Luke 13. 27.

^h Ps. 3. 4.

7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief ;

It waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ;

For the LORD hath ^aheard the voice of my weeping.

9 The LORD hath heard my supplication ;

The LORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed :

Let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

PSALM VII.

* Hab. 3. 1.

^a 2 Sam. 16.

* Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, * concerning the ² words of Cush the Benjamite.

1 O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust :

^aSave me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me :

* Ps. 31. 15.

^b Isai. 38. 13.

* Ps. 50. 22.

2 ^blest he tear my soul like a lion,

^cRendering *it* in pieces, while *there is* ³none to deliver.

¹ Or, *every night*.

² Or, *business*.

³ Heb. *not a deliverer*.

of the Hebrew, which implies extreme terror and dismay.

5. *no remembrance*] David speaks of those who die, not being delivered and saved. For such there is no opportunity to celebrate the mercy of God, or to give Him thanks. But under the old dispensation a veil hung over the intermediate state of the departed. David knew that life was the season for serving God, and that knowledge sufficed for practical purposes until the life and immortality, dimly anticipated by the Patriarchs, were brought to light by Christ. See Job x. 21 note.

in the grave] In Sheol, Hades, the unseen world.

7. *consumed*] **Wastes away**, as a garment fretted by moths (xxx. 9 ; cp. Job xvii. 7).

grief] Properly that caused by severe or unjust treatment : here that due to the fact that his enemies were seducing his people, and maturing their plots.

8. *Depart &c.*] The sudden change of tone is characteristic of David. No sooner does he feel that his prayer has reached the Lord than he is assured of its efficacy.

9. *The LORD hath heard*] This word, twice repeated, gives the fact ; the next clause, "will receive," i.e. accept and grant, states the effect of the prayer, which is represented as an accepted sacrifice. Cp. v. 3.

10. *Let all*] Or, "All mine enemies **shall** be ashamed—**shall turn back**." It is not a prayer but an assertion : David simply states his certainty of the result.

VII. This Psalm is generally admitted to

belong to the early life of David, when at the court of Saul he was calumniated by the courtiers of the king, whose jealousy and malice were becoming manifest. His chief enemy is represented as a person of great influence, and his own position is evidently one that exposed him to envy. The Psalm is remarkable for vivacity, rapid and vigorous transitions, and vivid imagery—points marking a genuine production of David's youth. Some refer it, chiefly on the ground of connexion with other Psalms, to the period of the king's flight, with special reference to the curses of Shimei.

The structure of this Psalm is disputed. The first part of five verses closes with *Selah*. The remainder may be divided (at v. 11) into two parts, each of six verses ; but the last verse stands probably alone, as an ejaculation.

Shiggaion] A musical term, which probably denotes a lyrical composition expressing mental exception.

Cush] The name does not occur in the book of Samuel. It designates some partizan of Saul's own tribe, one who shared the suspicion and envy of the king. Its meaning, "Ethiopian," may possibly refer to some personal characteristic, darkness of soul or of complexion (cp. Jer. xiii. 23 ; Amos ix. 7).

2. *he*] A sudden change from the plural to the singular (see v. 6, 7, xvii. 11, 12). Among David's enemies one took the lead. This may refer to Saul. The expressions recall David's early experience (1 Sam. xvii. 34-37).

- 3 O LORD my God, ^dif I have done this;
 If there be ^einiquity in my hands;
 4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me;
 (Yea, ^fI have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)
 5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it;
 Yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth,
 And lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.
 6 Arise, O LORD, in thine anger,
^gLift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies:
 And ^hawake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.
 7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about:
 For their sakes therefore return thou on high.
 8 The LORD shall judge the people:
 Judge me, O LORD, ⁱaccording to my righteousness,
 And according to mine integrity that is in me.
 9 O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end;
 But establish the just:
^kFor the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.
 10 ^lMy defence is of God,
 Which saveth the ^lupright in heart.
 11 ^mGod judgeth the righteous,
 And God is angry with the wicked every day.
 12 If he turn not, he will ⁿwhet his sword;
 He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
 13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death;
ⁿHe ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.
 14 ^oBehold, he travaileth with iniquity,
 1 Heb. *My buckler is upon God.* 2 Or, *God is a righteous judge.*

3. *this*] The charge in general; next specified more distinctly as a criminal act, ("iniquity in the hand," the instrument of crime; cp. marg. ref.); then as one of base ingratitude and treachery. Such accusations accord with David's position at Saul's court, and with the well-known suspicions of the king.

4. *I have delivered*] If this refer to the transactions related in the marg. ref. it truly expresses his generous character.

6. *awake for me &c.*] Somerender: "Awake for me! Thou hast ordained judgment."

7. *compass*] i.e. In that case the whole body of the people will come around Thee, recognizing Thee as the righteous Judge.

for their sakes] Or, *above*, i.e. over the congregation. God is represented as pronouncing this sentence from His throne over the assembly, and then returning on high. Every triumph of right is regarded by David as the result of a personal intervention of the righteous Judge.

8. *integrity*] i.e. Freedom from guilt with reference to the special charge.

in me] Or, *upon me*, as a robe (cp. Job xxix. 14). Cp. St. Paul's declaration (Phil. iii. 6).

9. *trieth*] In the specific sense of testing, assaying "the heart," the seat of the understanding, and "the reins," the will, the seat of natural impulses and affections; both

in contrast to mere outward appearances. Cp. marg. ref. and Job xix. 27; xxxii. 19 notes.

10. *My defence is of God*] See marg.; an expression which may denote that his shield or defence depends upon God, that he trusts to God to hold His shield over him; or, that he commits his defence to God.

11. *angry*] God manifests wrath, not by occasional outbursts, but by continuous indications of His intent to punish those who continually provoke Him.

12. *made it ready*] Or fixed it. When the bow is bent and strung the warrior places it in the proper position. The resemblance of this passage to Deut. (marg. ref.) is very striking.

13. *he ordaineth...persecutors*] Modern commentators adopt generally the rendering, *He maketh His arrows fiery ones*, in allusion to the old custom of covering arrow-heads with tow dipped in naphtha, which caught fire in passing through the air (cp. Ephes. vi. 16). They were used specially in attacking strongholds, and in setting buildings on fire.

God is here represented not as actually striking, but as preparing to strike. The sinner, who disregards general warnings, may be alarmed by indications of imminent destruction.

And hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

15 ¹He made a pit, and digged it,

²And is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

16 ³His mischief shall return upon his own head,

And his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

17 I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness:

And will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief Musician * upon Gittith, A Psalm of David.

* Ps. 81. &
84, title.

1 O LORD our Lord,

How ^aexcellent *is* thy name in all the earth!

Who ^bhast set thy glory above the heavens.

2 ^cOut of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ^dordained strength

Because of thine enemies,

That thou mightest still ^dthe enemy and the avenger.

3 When I ^econsider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 ^fWhat is man, that thou art mindful of him?

^f Job 7. 17.
Ps. 144. 3.
Heb. 2. 6.

¹ Heb. *He hath digged a pit.*

² Heb. *founded.*

15. *He made a pit, and digged it!* Or, **He dug a pit, and scooped it out.**

16. *i.e.* While the sinner is in the pit, which he is digging, the mass of evil which he had thrown up falls in and crushes him.

VIII. A Psalm in praise of Jehovah, Whose glory is seen in the heaven above and the earth beneath; in His care for the least of His creatures, and for man as for His chiefest work. This last idea is the point of the Psalm, which may be called a poetical meditation upon Gen. i.

Whether or not David wrote this Psalm at night (see v. 3), as he fed his flocks at Bethlehem (1 Sam. xvii. 15), is uncertain. The thought suggested by the sight of the heavens, of God's majesty and man's littleness, must often have occurred to David in his chequered life.

The words of the Psalm suggest thoughts and sentiments only to be fully explained and realized by a reference to Christ the Son of Man and Son of God, and Man's Ideal in humiliation and glory.

It is uncertain what instrument or what strain of music is intended, by Gittith; it seems to have been employed on joyful stirring occasions of praise and thanksgiving (Pss. lxxxi., lxxxiv); and it may have been a lyre or melody of Gath.

1. The meaning is; "How excellent art Thou in name and fame; how excellent in Thine adorable attributes, exhibited and made known, as they are, in Thine outward works! Thou hast set Thy glory (*i.e.* hast stamped the image of Thine infinite majesty) upon the heavens, and yet dost Thou condescend to reveal Thyself to man by near and, to some, less significant tokens."

This interpretation suits the import of the Psalm, and of vv. 3, 4 which follow.

2. *babes and sucklings*] The first means (see Jer. vi. 11, ix. 21) a young child above the age of infancy that plays in the streets, and asks for bread (Lam. iv. 4); the second (see 2 Macc. vii. 27) a young infant, not yet weaned, that lisps and mutters scarcely articulate sounds.

ordained strength] Or, "founded strength" (as in the margin). Glory is imaged as a palace or tower, which God has founded (Jer. xvi. 19); and the lips of young children and infants lay its first stone. Children and infants that cry to God with scarcely articulate mutterings, and obtain from Him needful support, declare His glory as conspicuously as the starry pole.

because of thine enemies] *i.e.* "To refute Thine enemies (xiv. 1) who deny Thy power, or care not to see it, and to satisfy Thy friends."

that thou mightest still] *i.e.* "Silence the lips of the vengeful enemy."

In Matt. xxi. 16 these words are quoted by our Lord Himself, not as indicating the Messianic character of the Psalm but for the purpose of noticing their truth in a conspicuous example. Children, by their Hosannas to the Son of David, shamed the Scribes and Pharisees who witnessed His miracles unmoved; as the enemies of God in David's time saw unmoved His wonders in heaven, the earth, and the wide sea.

3. *When*] *i.e.* "often as I consider" &c. *the work of thy fingers* &c.] In Ex. viii. 19, "the finger of God" works miracles; in xxxi. 18, it writes the Tables of the Law.

- And the son of man, that thou visitest him ?
 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
 And hast crowned him with glory and honour.
 6 ^aThou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
^bThou hast put all *things* under his feet :
 7 ¹All sheep and oxen,
 Yea, and the beasts of the field ;
 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
 9 ^cO LORD our Lord,
 How excellent *is* thy name in all the earth !

^a Gen. 1. 26, 28.^b 1 Cor. 15.

27.

Heb. 2. 6-8.

^c ver. 1.

PSALM IX. & X.

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben, A Psalm of David.

- 1 (N) I WILL praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart;
 I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.
 2 I will be glad and ^arejoice in thee :
 I will sing praise to thy name, O ^bthou most High.
 3 (2) When mine enemies are turned back,
 They shall fall and perish at thy presence.
 4 For ²thou hast maintained my right and my cause ;
 Thou satest in the throne judging ³right.
 5 (2) Thou hast rebuked the heathen,
 Thou hast destroyed the wicked,
 Thou hast ^cput out their name for ever and ever.

^a Ps. 5. 11.^b Ps. 56. 2.
^c & 83. 18.^c Deut. 9. 14.
Prov. 10. 7.¹ Heb. *Flocks and oxen all of them.*² Heb. *thou hast made my judgment.*³ Heb. *in righteousness.*

5. a little lower than the angels] Lit. "a little lower than God," or "the divine nature" (cp. Gen. i. 26-28). The meaning is, that man's nature, as originally framed, was divine, or a little lower than divine. The Authorised Version follows the LXX.

6, 7. These verses are quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews (marg. ref.) from the LXX.; and are applied to Christ's humiliation and to His exaltation to glory. Again, r. 6 is similarly applied by St. Paul in 1 Cor. (marg. ref.) Thus the Psalm affords the first example of a Psalm written originally, it may be, without any direct reference to Christ and His day, but admitting such an easy and natural application to them, and illustrating the circumstances of them even to the unknown future so pointedly, that it is scarcely possible to suppose that the divine Spirit did not intend such application, and adapt the portraiture of man to its future divine realization.

IX. A Psalm of thanksgiving after the defeat of foreign enemies (rr. 5, 15, 17); at a time, however, when the writer was still beset by adversaries. It was probably composed on David's return from an expedition against the Syrians or Philistines. This and the following Psalm (see Introd. to Ps. x.) are arranged, though loosely and incompletely, in alphabetic order, either to facilitate their recitation in the Temple-

service, or, more probably, to aid the memory; this being, like most other alphabetical Psalms, of a didactic character; see Ps. xxv., xxxiv., cxl., cxix., cxlv., three of which are ascribed in the titles to David. Both Ps. ix. and x. are archaic in style, and have marked characteristics of Davidic composition. There appears also to be a close connexion between Ps. ix. and Ps. vii., viii.; cp. ix. 1 with the close of the viiith and the whole tone of the viiith. See however, r. 11 note.

The structure is regular, ten equal strophes of four verses each, the close of two being marked by Higaion and Selah.

Muth-labben] An obscure term, probably the name of some well-known melody.

1. *shew forth*] Or, *recount*; rendered "declare" in xix. 1. The word is frequently combined with "marvellous works," i.e. specially acts by which God saves and protects His people (Ex. iii. 20, xxxiv. 10; Josh. iii. 5).

3. This verse states the cause of thanksgiving. God looking down from the throne, on which He sat as judge of the conflict (cp. vii. 7 note), threw them into confusion. See Ex. xiv. 24.

4. *maintained*] Lit. (as in marg.), "made (i.e. executed) my judgment," in order to vindicate the just cause.

5. A war of extermination, provoked by

6 (7) ¹O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end :
And thou hast destroyed cities ;
Their memorial is perished with them.

^d Ps. 102. 12,
20.

^e Heb. 1. 11.

^c Ps. 96. 13.

^f & 98. 9.

^g Ps. 32. 7.

^h & 37. 39.

ⁱ & 46. 1.

^j Ps. 91. 14.

7 (7) ^aBut the LORD shall endure for ever :
He hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And ^ehe shall judge the world in righteousness,
He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 ^fThe LORD also will be ^ga refuge for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that ^hknow thy name will put their trust in thee :
For thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 (7) Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion :

^aDeclare among the people his doings.

^k Ps. 107. 22.

^l Gen. 9. 5. 12 ⁱWhen he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them :

He forgetteth not the cry of the ³humble.

13 (7) Have mercy upon me, O LORD ;
Consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me,
Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death :

14 That I may shew forth all thy praise
In the gates of the daughter of Zion :
I will ^krejoice in thy salvation.

^k Ps. 13. 5.

^l & 20. 5.

^m & 35. 9.

¹ Or, *The destructions of the enemy are come to a*

perpetual end : and their cities
hast thou destroyed, &c.

² Heb. *an high place.*

³ Or, *afflicted.*

great crimes of the heathen, would seem to be described, such as David waged against the Ammonites (see 2 Sam. xii. 31. Cp. Deut. xxv. 19).

6. The most probable rendering seems to be, **The enemy are extinct, in ruins for ever, and the cities Thou hast destroyed, their very memory has perished.** Cp. Ex. xv. 4-6; Deut. xxxii. 26; Isai. xiv. 20; Job xviii. 17.

7. *shall endure*] Rather, **is seated**, *i.e.* on the throne of judgment. The serene majesty of the eternal Judge is contrasted with the struggles and overthrow of evil men.

prepared] Or, "established."

8. All things point to one end, the perfect manifestation of righteousness by a personal manifestation of God : an anticipation, of which the realization began with the first, and will be completed by the second, coming of our Lord.

9. *a refuge*] Properly (as in the marg.) a "high place," a fort on the summit of an inaccessible rock, such as often afforded a refuge to David in early days of exile (cp. 2 Sam. xxii. 3; Ps. xci. 2).

oppressed] Lit. "crushed." The Hebrew word occurs rarely (cp. x. 18, lxxiv. 21).

10. *know*] *i.e.* "Know and realize what Thy name involves," viz. the attributes of God manifested by acts of righteousness and love.

11. *in Zion*] This proves that the Psalm was composed after the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem. If, therefore, the date as-

signed to Ps. viii. be correct, this does not belong to the same group.

people] **Peoples**; an important change, since it shows David's sense of the extent of his mission, a foreshadowing of the work fulfilled in Christ. The verse marks a stage in the development of religious thought. David has two fixed principles—one that the Presence of the Lord is specially manifested in Zion as Head of the Theocracy, the other that His mighty acts are to be declared to all nations. See xviii. 49 note; and Intro. p. 102.

12. *When he maketh inquisition for blood*] Rather, **For when He requireth blood**, in the sense of searching into and exacting retribution. God is the *god* (*i.e.* avenger of blood) of all humanity.

13. The change of tone is remarkable : the more usual course of the Psalmist's thought is from complaint to prayer, followed immediately by the sense of deliverance; but there is a profound meaning in the order here, for while the thought of God's searching judgments gives confidence to the afflicted, it brings hidden sins to remembrance : David felt the need of mercy, and he was surrounded by domestic enemies.

14. *in the gates*] As generally in the East, the city-gates were the places of public assembly.

daughter of Zion] *i.e.* The people of Jerusalem, regarded in their filial relationship to the "eternal congregation" of which Zion is the representative or abode.

- 15 (ב) ¹The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made:
In the net which they hid is their own foot taken.
- 16 The LORD is ²known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth:
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. ³Higgaion.
Selah.
- 17 (ג) The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the nations ⁴that forget God.
- 18 (ד) ⁵For the needy shall not alway be forgotten:
⁶The expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.
- 19 Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail:
Let the heathen be judged in thy sight.
- 20 Put them in fear, O LORD:
That the nations may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah.

¹ Ps. 7. 15.
² & 35. 8.
Prov. 5. 22.
³ & 22. 8.
⁴ Ex. 7. 5.
⁵ & 14. 4, 10,
31.
⁶ Ps. 10. 14.
⁷ & 92. 3.
⁸ Job 8. 13.
Ps. 50. 22.
⁹ ver. 12.
Ps. 12. 5.
¹⁰ Prov. 23.
18.
¹¹ & 24. 14.

- 1 (ה) WHY standest thou afar off, O LORD?
Why hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?
- 2 ¹The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor:
²Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
- 3 For the wicked ³boasteth of his ⁴heart's desire,
And ⁵blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth.

¹ Ps. 7. 16.
² & 9. 15, 16.
Prov. 5. 22.
³ Ps. 94. 4.
⁴ Prov. 28. 4.

¹ That is, *Meditation*.

² Heb. *In the pride of the*

wicked he doth perse-

cute.

³ Heb. *soul's*.

⁴ Or, *the covetous blesseth himself, he abhorreth the LORD.*

16. Render, "Jehovah hath made Himself known, He hath executed judgment, snaring the wicked in his own handiwork."

Higgaion] Probably an interlude, giving musical expression to the feelings suggested by God's judgment, followed by Selah, or a sweep of harp-strings.

17. *turned*] Lit., *returned*, or *turned back into Sheol*. The state so designated is that of the departed. The expression *turned back* implies a fitness in the punishment, which, although it may not necessarily involve, yet certainly suggests, the foreboding of a terrible and irreversible doom. Cp. Acts i. 25.

19. *prevail*] Lit. "be strong." There is a contrast between the original of the word "man" (viii. 4), which means weak, and his act, which implies strength: hence the point in the prayer of v. 20, let the peoples know that they are "men," or "weak," and therefore that their violence is as irrational as it is futile.

in thy sight] Or, "before Thy face" (see v. 3), in Thy Presence as Judge of the earth.

20. *Put them in fear*] Or, "Set terror over them," i.e. let terror be arrayed against them, encountering and overthrowing them. Another rendering is, "give them a teacher," or "a lesson" (see Judg. viii. 16); a sense which appears well suited to the context, and in accordance with David's principles (cp. lxxii. 8-11).

X. This Psalm is closely connected with the preceding. The alphabetic arrangement, though incomplete, appears to be continued, and there are marked coincidences of style and language. These facts, together with the

omission of any superscription have satisfied most critics that this forms the second part of one composition. In the LXX. it is actually combined with the ixth, an arrangement which affects the numbering of all the following Psalms. The difference from the tone of thought and feeling of Ps. ix. may be accounted for, if we suppose (see v. 1 note), that the Psalmist turns his mind to the internal state of Israel. Throughout the reign of David and under most of his successors, Palestine was infested by brigands, and disturbed by a factious nobility.

1. Ps. ix. ends with an appeal to Jehovah against foreign enemies; the Psalmist now turns his thoughts to his own country, in which he sees a prevalence of crimes, which indicates a suspension of judgment, and calls for divine interposition.

hidest thou] Either the "eyes," so as not to see (Lev. xx. 4); or, the "ears," so as not to hear (Lam. iii. 56).

in times of trouble] Referring to ix. 9.

2. Or, "In the arrogance of the wicked the poor is on fire." *They, the poor, are ensnared in the devices, which they, the wicked, have imagined.*

3. *the wicked boasteth*] Lit. "sings" a hymn of praise in honour of his own greed.

and blesseth the covetous] The wicked not only commits the crime himself, but pronounces others happy in proportion to their successful villainy (cp. xlix. 18; Rom. i. 32).

whom the LORD abhorreth] Rather (cp. the marg.), *he despiseth Jehovah*. The contrast is complete, "blesseth" and "despise" having for objects severally the covetous man and Jehovah.

- ^d Ps. 14. 2. 4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, ^dwill not seek after God:
- ^e Ps. 14. 1. 1 God is not in all his ^ethoughts.
- ^f Ps. 53. 1. 5 His ways are always grievous;
- ^g Prov. 24. 7. 7 Thy judgments are far above out of his sight:
- ^h Ps. 12. 5. As for all his enemies, ^hhe puffeth at them.
- ⁱ Ps. 30. 6. 6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved:
- ^j Eccles. 8. 11. 1 For I shall ^jnever be in adversity.
- ^k Isai. 56. 12. 7 His mouth is full of cursing and ^kdeceit and fraud:
- ^l Rev. 18. 7. 1 Under his tongue is mischief ^land ^lvanity.
- ^m Rom. 3. 14. 8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages:
- ⁿ Job 20. 12. 1 In the secret places doth he murder the innocent:
- ^o Ps. 12. 2. 2 His eyes ^oare privily set against the poor.
- ^p Hab. 3. 14. 9 He lieth in wait ^psecretly as a lion in his den:
- ^q Ps. 17. 12. He lieth in wait to catch the poor:
- ^r Mic. 7. 2. He doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.
- 10 He croucheth, and humbleth himself,
That the poor may fall ^sby his strong ones.
- 11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten:
- ^s Job 22. 13. He hideth his face; he will never see ^sit.
- ^t Ps. 73. 11. 12 (7) Arise, O LORD; O God, ^tlift up thine hand:
- ^u Ps. 94. 7. Forget not the ^uhumble.
- ^v Ezek. 8. 12. 13 Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God?
- ^w Ezek. 9. 9. He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require ^wit.
- ^x Mic. 5. 9. 14 (7) Thou hast seen ^xit; for thou beholdest mischief and spite,

¹ Or, all his thoughts are,
There is no God.

² Heb. unto generation and
generation.

³ Heb. deceits.

⁴ Or, iniquity.

⁵ Heb. hide themselves.

⁶ Heb. in the secret places.

⁷ Heb. He breaketh him-
self.

⁸ Or, into his strong parts.

⁹ Or, afflicted.

4. Render, **The wicked in the height of his scorn** (*sait*), "He (*i.e.* God; cp. *v.* 13, ix. 12) will not require"—"there is no God!"—(such are) all his thoughts. The Hebrew words rendered "through the pride of his countenance" mean literally in the height, lifting up, of his nostrils.

thoughts] David does not speak of the words, but of the innermost thoughts, of the wicked; their practical, it may be half-conscious atheism.

5. *grievous*] Rather, "firm," steadfast and consistent; the wicked, as such, has no fear of man or God.

far above out of his sight] *i.e.* God's justice is above and beyond the wicked man's sphere of vision.

6. See marg. The wicked looks forward to a future of unbroken prosperity, not only for himself but for his descendants (cp. xvii. 14, xlix. 11, and Job xxi. 8).

7-10. A graphic description of disorders which in the Psalmist's time made life bitter in Palestine. The traits probably describe the wild, half-savage nobles, who retained habits formed or developed in the troubled period which preceded the establishment of the kingdom. This passage is therefore to be regarded as one among many indications of an early date.

8. *villages*] The inclosed and fortified vil-

lages, in which the agricultural population dwelt together for protection against such assaults. The robber watches them in ambush.

9. Render, **he lurks in the covert as a lion in his lair**; *i.e.* the thick brushwood of the jungle.

the poor] The word, frequently rendered thus (in *v.* 12, "humble"), does not here imply poverty, but "gentleness;" it is the normal term for those who do not inflict injury and are unable to resist it.

catch] the metaphor changes; the man-hunter, more crafty than the lion, catches his prey by drawing him into his net.

10. Each word in the original presents some difficulty. The general meaning is clear; but the whole verse is a remarkable instance of obscure and rugged construction, justly regarded as a proof of early date. Another rendering refers the first clause to the poor—"And crushed he sinks down, and falls by his strong ones, helpless."

13. *Wherefore*] *i.e.* "Why is it permitted that the wicked should despise God?" the same word as "abhorreth" in *v.* 3. The clause, "Thou wilt not require" corresponds exactly to ix. 12 (see note). In the A. V. the change of words obscures the connexion of thought.

14. *Thou hast seen it*] With emphatic re-

To requite *it* with thy hand:
The poor ¹committeth himself unto thee;
²Thou art the helper of the fatherless.

15 (W) ^aBreak thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man:
Seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

16 ^aThe LORD *is* King for ever and ever:
The heathen are perished out of his land.

17 (J) LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble:
Thou wilt ^bprepare their heart,
Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

18 To ^ajudge the fatherless and the oppressed,
That the man of the earth may no more ³oppress.

^a 2 Tim. 1. 12.
¹ Pet. 4. 19.
^c Ps. 68. 5.
Hos. 14. 3.
^a Ps. 37. 17.

^a Ps. 29. 10.
& 145. 13.
Jer. 10. 10.
Lam. 5. 19.
Dan. 4. 34.
1 Tim. 1. 17.
^v 1 Chr. 20.
18.
^a Ps. 82. 3.
Isai. 11. 4.

PSALM XI.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David.

1 ^aIN the LORD put I my trust:

^bHow say ye to my soul, Flee *as* a bird to your mountain?

2 For, lo, ^cthe wicked bend *their* bow,

^dThey make ready their arrow upon the string,
That they may ^eprivily shoot at the upright in heart.

3 ^eIf the foundations be destroyed,—what can the righteous do?

4 ^fThe LORD *is* in his holy temple,

The LORD's ^gthrone *is* in heaven:

^hHis eyes behold,—his eyelids try, the children of men.

5 The LORD ⁱtrieth the righteous:

But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

^a Ps. 56. 11.

^b See 1 Sam.
26. 19, 20.
^c Ps. 64. 3, 4.
^d Ps. 21. 19.

^e Ps. 82. 5.
^f Hab. 2. 20.
^g Ps. 2. 4.
Isai. 66. 1.
Matt. 5. 34.
Acts 7. 49.
Rev. 4. 2.
^h Ps. 33. 13.
& 34. 15.
& 66. 7.
ⁱ Gen. 22. 1.
Jam. 1. 12.

¹ Heb. *leaveeth*.

² Or, *establish*.

³ Or, *terrify*.

⁴ Heb. *in darkness*.

ference to the bad man's thought, "He will never see" (v. 11).

spite] Rather, "grief;" the word is used specially of impatience, or fretting under wrongful suffering (see Job vi. 2 note). God sees on the one side the crime, on the other the disturbance of moral feeling, with the intent to take *the whole matter* into His hand (as in the Prayer-Book Version).

the fatherless] As in v. 18, the type of all who are desolate (cp. Job vi. 27).

15. *seek out*] The word specially characteristic of the Psalm, in the sense "require" (v. 13) and "punish." **Thou shalt search out and punish his wickedness, until Thou shalt not find** (cp. xxxvii. 36) *ought to punish*, until all vestige of his existence is annihilated.

16. The close of the Psalm is confident and triumphant. This transition of feeling, common in the Davidic Psalms, is a recurrence to the commencing strain of the ixth Psalm.

the heathen] A special point of connection between the two Psalms (see ix. 19, 20). What the Psalmist there prayed for he regards here as accomplished.

17. *thou wilt prepare*] Or (as in marg.) "establish," in the sense of strengthen and comfort.

18. *the man of the earth*] i.e. Frail mortal

man (see ix. 19 note). David here prays that the heathen being weak, of the earth, earthy, they may be no more terrible.

XI. The facts recorded in this Psalm point clearly to the position of David at Saul's court, when first seriously endangered by calumniators. The style is animated, somewhat obscure in the original, with rapid transitions, characteristic of the earlier Davidic Psalms.

1. *Flee &c.*] Lit. **Flee ye to your mountain, O birds.** A proverbial expression. David's friends, like Jonathan (1 Sam. xix. 2) probably in all sincerity urged him to take flight. See marg. ref.

2. *privily*] Rather, as in the margin. Saul intended the murder to be done at night, both for the sake of secrecy and surprise (cp. 1 Sam. xix. 1, 2).

3. A timid friend might suggest, "What will righteousness avail thee, when the very foundation of justice is overthrown? when the king who should administer justice is your foe?"

4-6. The answer of David. An earthly king may reign here, but Jehovah, the only true King, is in the sanctuary of His palace, His throne is in heaven.

try] See vii. 9 note.

* Gen. 19. 24.
Ezek. 38. 22.
† See Gen.
43. 34.
1 Sam. 1. 4.
& 9. 23.
Ps. 75. 8.
* Ps. 45. 7.

* Job 36. 7.
Ps. 33. 18.
& 34. 15.
1 Pet. 3. 12.
* Ps. 6, title.
* Isai. 67. 1.
Mic. 7. 2.
* Ps. 10. 7.
* Ps. 23. 3.
& 62. 4.
Jer. 9. 8.
Rom. 16. 18.
† 1 Sam. 2. 3.
Ps. 17. 10.

* Ex. 3. 7, 8.
Isai. 33. 10.
† Ps. 10. 5.
* 2 Sam. 22.
31.
Ps. 18. 30.
& 119. 140.
Prov. 30. 5.

- 6 * Upon the wicked he shall rain ¹ snares,
Fire and brimstone, and ² an horrible tempest :
¹ *This shall be* the portion of their cup.
7 For the righteous LORD ^m loveth righteousness ;
ⁿ His countenance doth behold the upright.

PSALM XII.

To the chief Musician ^s * upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David,

- 1 ⁴ **HELP, LORD** ; for ^a the godly man ceaseth ;
For the faithful fail from among the children of men.
2 ^b They speak vanity every one with his neighbour :
^c *With* flattering lips *and* with ⁵ a double heart do they speak.
3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaketh ^d *proud* things :
4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail ;
Our lips ⁷ *are* our own : who *is* lord over us ?
5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
^e Now will I arise, saith the LORD ;
I will set *him* in safety *from him that* ^f *puffeth* at him.
6 The words of the LORD *are* ^g *pure* words :
As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,
Thou shalt preserve ^h them from this generation for ever.
8 The wicked walk on every side,
When ⁱ the vilest men are exalted.

PSALM XIII.

To the ² chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 **HOW** long wilt thou forget me, O LORD ? for ever ?

¹ Or, *quick burning coals.*
² Or, *a burning tempest.*
³ Or, *upon the eighth.*
⁴ Or, *Sace.*

⁵ Heb. *an heart and an*
heart, 1 Chr. 12. 33.
⁶ Heb. *great things.*
⁷ Heb. *are with us.*
⁸ Or, *oversee him.*

⁹ Heb. *him* : that is, *every*
one of them.
¹ Heb. *the vilest of the sons*
of men are exalted.
² Or, *overseer.*

6. *snares*] The metaphor may be explained as comparing flashes of lightning, falling suddenly and surprising the criminal, to fiery cords thrown over the prey.

fire and brimstone] See marg. ref. In the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah Prophets and Psalmist saw the great example and type of divine judgments (cp. Job xviii. 15).

horrible tempest] The Hebrew word probably means "a fiery blast." It is rendered elsewhere "horror" (cxix. 53 ; see also Lam. v. 10 marg. rendering).

7. *his countenance doth behold the upright*] Rather, **the upright will behold His countenance**, expressive of the highest state of blessedness (see xvii. 15 ; 1 Joh. iii. 2).

XII. This Psalm resembles those which precede it in the description of prevalent hypocrisy and ungodliness, and is probably connected with them ; being a promise that the four times repeated prayer, "Arise, O Lord" (iii. 7, vii. 6, ix. 19, x. 12), shall be answered.

The Psalm is divided into two equal parts, each of four verses ; the former part has the prayer, the second the answer.

1. *godly...faithful*] The former word denotes piety, the second, steadfastness in faith.

3. *proud things*] See Dan. vii. 8. 20 ; Rev. xiii. 5.

4. *our lips are our own*] More correctly, as in marg., *i.e.* "We depend on them for success" (Isai. xxviii. 15).

This verse describes the special form of the prevalent guilt, the abuse of the tongue, probably with special reference to courts of law.

5. *puffeth at him*] Render, "I will put in safety him against whom man puffeth ;" or, "I will put him in that safety for which he pants."

6. *furnace of earth*] Or, "furnace in the earth : " the furnace, or crucible, was probably fixed in the earth. The point seems to be, that God's word is tried, its purity and efficacy tested, by contact with the earth and the earthly nature of man.

8. Or, **Wicked men prowl about when villainy exalts itself among the children of men.**

XIII. This was written, not improbably, when David was pursued by Saul. It is

- ^aHow long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart daily?
 How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
 3 Consider and hear me, O LORD my God :
^bLighten mine eyes, ^clest I sleep the *sleep of death* ;
 4 ^dLest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him ;
And those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.
 5 But I have ^etrusted in thy mercy ;
 My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
 6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath ^fdealt bountifully
 with me.

^a Deut. 31.
 17.
 Job 13. 24.
 Ps. 44. 24.
 & 89. 46.
 Isai. 59. 2.

^b Ezra 9. 8.
^c Jer. 51. 39.
^d Ps. 25. 2.
 & 35. 19.
 & 38. 16.
^e Ps. 33. 21.

^f Ps. 116. 7.
 & 119. 17.

PSALM XIV.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm of David.*

- 1 THE ^afool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*
^bThey are corrupt, they have done abominable works,
There is none that doeth good.
 2 ^cThe LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
 To see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God.*
 3 ^dThey are all gone aside, they are *all* together become ^efilthy :
There is none that doeth good, no, not one.
 4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge ?
 Who ^feat up my people *as* they eat bread,
 And ^gcall not upon the LORD.

^a Ps. 10. 4.
 & 53. 1. &c.
^b Gen. 6. 11,
 12.
 Rom. 3. 10,
 &c.
^c Ps. 33. 13.
 & 102. 19.
^d Rom. 3.
 10, 11, 12.

^e Jer. 10. 25.
 Amos 8. 4.
 Mic. 3. 3.
^f Ps. 79. 6.
 Isai. 64. 7.

^g Heb. *stinking*.

remarkable for the contrast between the Psalmist's trouble and affliction (rr. 1-5), and the deep inwardness of his faith, hope, and gratitude to the Lord (r. 6).

1. *How long* &c.] i.e. Surely not for ever.

2. *take counsel*] Or, *settle counsels*. David represents himself as meditating plan after plan.

daily] Or, *by day*; the night is passed in harassing thoughts, the day in bitter sorrow.

be exalted over me] Cp. xii. 8. This refers probably to an individual, such as Doeg, or Cush (see Ps. vii. title).

3. *lighten mine eyes*] The eyes bedimmed by weariness or sorrow are lightened by the revival of strength, or hope. Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29.

5. The "I" is emphatic: *but as for me I have trusted in Thy grace*. Throughout the trial the trust has been unshaken. It is the abiding habit of the Psalmist's soul.

XIV. The Psalm, with few but not unimportant variations, occurs twice; see Ps. liii. In this, Jehovah, but in the liiird, God (Elohim) is used constantly. Both Psalms are attributed to David. This describes in general terms a state of profligacy connected with a practical atheism, in that respect not substantially differing from preceding Psalms, to which there appear to be some references. Thus r. 6 is the upshot of xiii. 2: contrast r. 5 with xii. 7.

The structure resembles that of David's

earliest Psalm (xi); two parts, three verses each, with an ejaculatory close.

1. *The fool*] The Hebrew language is singularly rich in words expressing folly, with the inseparable notion of wickedness. Here the word chosen by David, means imbecile, a vapid, worn-out fool, one whose heart and understanding are degraded, incapable of seeing truth. The word is rendered "the vile person" in Isaiah xxxii. 6; see also Job ii. 10.

hath said in his heart] In his innermost consciousness, the seat of thought and conviction. A conclusion thus formed is a settled conviction. Whether the *fool* speaks it out or not, he is an atheist, "God is not, such is all his thought" (cp. x. 4 note).

corrupt &c.] The outward proofs of the inward godlessness of the fool.

none that doeth good] This phrase declares the truth as regards the fool and his class.

3. *all gone aside*] The word is used properly of apostates, those who have known God and forsaken Him.

filthy] Lit. "rancid" (milk or wine); used here of the corruption of a nature originally good. Cp. Job xv. 16.

St. Paul turns this Psalm with terrible force against his unbelieving countrymen (see marg. ref.).

4. *eat up my people as they eat bread*] The figure is common; but the construction of the sentence is doubtful: it may mean, "eating my people they eat bread"

5 There ¹were they in great fear:
For God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

6 Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor,
Because the LORD *is* his ²refuge.

^a Ps. 9. 9.

^b 142. 5.

^c Ps. 53. 6.

^d Job 42. 10.

Ps. 126. 1.

7 ^{2a} Oh that the salvation of Israel *were* come out of Zion!
ⁱ When the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people
Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 24. 3.

^b Ps. 2. 6.

^c 3. 4.

^d Isai. 33. 15.

^e Zech. 8. 18.

^f Eph. 4. 25.

^g Lev. 19. 16.

Ps. 34. 13.

^h Ex. 23. 1.

ⁱ Esth. 3. 2.

^j Judg. 11.

35.

1 LORD, "who shall ³abide in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in ^bthy holy hill?"

2 ^c He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And ^dspeaketh the truth in his heart.

3 ^e He that backbiteth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his neighbour,

^f Nor ^gtaketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 ^h In whose eyes a vile person is contemned;
But he honoureth them that fear the LORD.

ⁱ He that ^jsweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.

¹ Heb. *they feared a fear*, ² Heb. *Who will give*, &c.

Ps. 53. 5.

See Rom. 11. 26.

³ Heb. *sojourn*.

⁴ Or, *receiveth*, or, *endureth*.

nourish themselves by preying upon them; or, "eating my people, they live on, calmly enjoying their easy and luxurious life." Cp. Ps. xxii. 26. 29.

5. *There*] i.e. Where God surprises them, making His Presence felt. He is, in fact, among those whom they are devouring, "the righteous generation." Like wild beasts startled by a sudden attack they are struck by a panic.

6. *Ye have shamed*] Rather, **You may shame** (i.e. strive to baffle) **the counsel of the humble** (but it will be in vain) **for Jehovah is his refuge**. This verse would well befit David's position described in 1 Sam. xxiii. 7-14.

7. This verse presents some difficulty; the special Presence of Jehovah in Zion implies a period later than the setting up of the Tabernacle; and the other clauses are most naturally understood in reference to the Babylonian Captivity. The verse would then be regarded as a late addition to the Psalm, adapting it to the circumstances of Israel in exile.

Others consider that the words "out of Zion" suit the feelings of David in his flight, when he had left the Ark in Zion; they explain the expression "bring back the captivity" generally of deliverance from affliction (Job xlii. 10), or literally (Judg. v. 12). The structure of the Psalm is favourable to the supposition of its integrity.

XV. This Psalm is supposed to have been composed by David for the great festival when he brought the Ark into the Tabernacle at Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12-19). The Psalm bears a striking resemblance to the xxivth, which celebrates the solemn entrance of the Ark into the gates of Zion; this may have

been recited before the Tabernacle when the Ark was placed in it. Some hold that it was written by David in banishment, and point to the connexion of thoughts between this and the preceding Psalm, which they assign to that period.

1. *abide*] Or, as in marg., **sojourn** as a favoured settler. The believer is admitted as a settler, and then takes up his permanent abode in his Father's dwelling.

holy hill] The hill of Zion became holy by the establishment of the Ark, the symbol and pledge of the Divine Presence.

2. *walketh uprightly*] Lit. "perfectly." Cp. Gen. xvii. 1. The word is constantly used to denote a consistent and thoroughly conscientious life (see Job i. 1 note). Cp. ci. 2, a Psalm which bears a close resemblance to this, and was probably composed at the same date.

worketh righteousness] Contrast with "workers of iniquity" (xiv. 4). In the next clause, the words "speaketh the truth in his heart," recall "with a double heart do they speak" (xii. 2).

3. *his neighbour...his neighbour*] Different words. The former denotes intimacy, the latter mere vicinity.

taketh up] Better than the marginal rendering. The calumniator takes up the lie, and circulates it.

4. *In whose eyes &c.*] Or, according to the old Jewish interpretation, "he is despaired in his own eyes, and worthless, and fearsers of the LORD he honoureth." Cp. 2 Sam. vi. 22. David thus makes the extreme humility ("poorness of spirit," Matt. v. 3) a chief characteristic of God's people; see xxii. 6.

to his own hurt] If a man made an un-

5 ¹ *He that putteth not out his money to usury,*

² *Nor taketh reward against the innocent.*

He that doeth these things ¹ *shall never be moved.*

PSALM XVI.

¹ *Michtam of David.*

1 PRESERVE me, O God: ^a *for in thee do I put my trust.*

2 *O my soul,* thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord:

^b *My goodness extendeth not to thee;*

3 *But to the saints that are in the earth,*
And to the excellent, in whom *is* all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* ² *hasten after another god:*

Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer,

^c *Nor take up their names into my lips.*

5 ^a *The LORD is the portion* ³ *of mine inheritance and* ^c *of my cup:*
Thou maintainest my lot.

¹ Or, *A golden Psalm of David.*

² Or, *give gifts to another.*
³ Heb. *of my part.*

^a Ex. 22. 25.
Lev. 25. 36.
Deut. 23. 19.
Ezek. 18. 8.
^b Ex. 23. 8.
Deut. 18. 19.
^c Ps. 16. 8.
2 Pet. 1. 10.

^a Ps. 25. 20.

^b Job 22. 2.
Ps. 50. 9.
Rom. 11. 35.

^c Ex. 23. 13.
Josh. 23. 7.
Hos. 2. 16.
^a Deut. 32. 9.
Ps. 73. 26.
Jer. 10. 16.
Lam. 3. 24.
^c Ps. 11. 6.

guarded oath he was bound to keep it if injured himself only, but if it involved doing evil to others, the Law provided a trespass-offering (Lev. v. 4, 5, 6). In the former case he was not allowed to "change" it (Lev. xxvii. 10).

5. *usury*] The prohibition (see marg. ref.) is admitted to apply to dealings between Israelites, but the principle undoubtedly includes all abuse of usury.

taketh reward] See marg. ref. and cp. the charge of Jehoshaphat to his judges (2 Chr. xix. 6, 7). This warning, ever needed and constantly repeated, fitly closes the king's enumeration of the conditions of citizenship in the true Israel.

XVI. This Psalm is remarkable for its evangelical spirit; in none is the faith stronger, the hope, indeed the certainty, of immortal life, more fully developed. It is ascribed to David by St. Peter and St. Paul on two solemn occasions (Acts ii. 25, xiii. 35); but some hold it to belong to the period of the Captivity. It is, however, full of the spirit of David; it is connected with the Psalms which precede and follow it by several thoughts and expressions; and the style is recognized as belonging unquestionably to high antiquity, and bearing clear traces of transactions in the early portion of David's reign before the dark cloud had fallen on his spirit; perhaps soon after his peaceful settlement (2 Sam. vii. 1), or earlier still (cp. *rv.* 2, 3 with 1 Sam. xxx. 26; and *v.* 4 with 1 Sam. xxvi. 19). That the Psalm is typical and Messianic will not be questioned by those who recognize the authority of the New Testament.

The structure is nearly regular, three parts, the first and second each with four verses, the third with three only.

Michtam] The interpretation, "a golden psalm," rests on Rabbinical authority; it is adopted by the Fathers generally, and seems

not unsuitable to the five Psalms (lvi.-lx), where it occurs; it is especially adapted to this Psalm, so remarkable for richness in spiritual thoughts and imagery.

2. *O my soul*] These words are not in the original. The ancient Versions had, "I said to Jehovah, Thou art my Lord" (Adonai).

my goodness extendeth not to thee] This rendering is incorrect; the Hebrew may mean either, "My well-being (*i.e.* prosperity or happiness) is not above Thee," or, "beyond Thee;" *i.e.* "is as nought compared with Thee;" or "depends wholly upon Thee." The general sense is "my happiness is of Thee only."

3. The connexion of this verse with *v.* 2 would seem to be: "My well-being, which is wholly from Thee, is for (*i.e.* is granted for the benefit of) the saints (all the people of the Covenant), those who are in the land (all true Israelites), and for the noble (noble in spirit), in whom is all my delight."

4. *hasten after*] Or, see marg. The Hebrew word rendered "hasten" is rendered "endow" in Ex. xxii. 16, *i.e.* pay a dowry: and modern commentators prefer this rendering: but the sense "hasten" is found in all the old Versions.

offerings of blood] Hateful, as though mingled with blood, or, as if offered by murderers (cp. Isai. lxvi. 3). The term may possibly be applied to wine mingled with blood, of which there is frequent mention. It may, however, be noticed that on Egyptian monuments the priest is represented as piercing the head of a kneeling figure, whose blood spurts out as a libation.

5. David claims the inheritance of Aaron and his seed (Num. xviii. 20, *reff.*) for himself as head of the Theocracy, and type of Him Who is anointed Priest, and King, and Lord of all.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places* ;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel :
My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

∫ Ps. 17. 3.

∩ Acts 2. 25.

∧ Ps. 73. 23.

& 110. 5.

∩ Ps. 15. 5.

∩ Ps. 30. 12.

& 57. 8.

∩ Ps. 40. 15.

Acts 2. 27.

& 13. 35.

∩ Lev. 19. 28.

Num. 6. 6.

∩ Matt. 7. 14.

∩ Ps. 17. 15.

Matt. 5. 8.

1 Cor. 13. 12.

1 John 3. 2.

∩ Ps. 36. 8.

8 ¶ I have set the LORD always before me :
Because ^hhe is at my right hand, ⁱI shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, ^kand my glory rejoiceth :
My flesh also shall ^lrest in hope.

10 ¶ For thou wilt not leave ^mmy soul in hell ;
Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see *corruption*.

11 Thou wilt shew me the ⁿpath of life :

^oIn thy presence is fulness of joy ;

^pAt thy right hand *there* are pleasures for evermore.

PSALM XVII.

A Prayer of David.

1 HEAR ²the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry,
Give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* ³not out of feigned lips.

¹ Heb. *dwell confidently*.

² Heb. *justice*.

³ Heb. *without lips of deceit*.

6. *The lines*] Which marked the boundaries of a property (cp. Josh. xvii. 5, where the word is translated "portions"). The words naturally imply a new grant, and accord with the view that this Psalm was composed when David took up his abode in Jerusalem.

7. *counsel*] This may refer to a special intimation of God's will touching his settlement (cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 9-12; 2 Sam. v. 19). *reins*] See Job xix. 27 note. This verse implies that the happy settlement had been preceded by anxious meditations at night, ever associated in David's mind with self-examination and the searching of man's spirit by God.

8-10. This passage is quoted by St. Peter and St. Paul as directly, or in its highest sense, applicable to the Messiah. It contains one of the very clearest and strongest declarations of belief in a blessed futurity which can be adduced from the Old Testament. There is but one adequate explanation of such a fact, viz. that the Spirit of Christ, which was in David as a Prophet (see 1 Pet. i. 11; Acts ii. 30), moved and controlled his utterances, so that, while they expressed fully his own yearnings, they signified beforehand the glory that should follow in the Resurrection of Christ.

9. *my glory*] i.e. My soul, or spirit; man's spiritual nature, which is his true glory, and in which is found the image and likeness to God. In this passage is the threefold division of man's nature: the heart, as the seat of the understanding; the soul, as the abode of spiritual instincts; and the flesh, or body. Each has its own blessing; even the lowest is secure of endurance; the "hope" or "confidence" involves the thought of permanence or restoration. The words "shall *rest* in hope" correspond to xv. 1, "shall

dwell in Thy holy hill," where the same verb is used in the Hebrew.

10. *hell*] "Sheol," here, as always, the abode of the departed. God will not leave the soul in that intermediate state into which it passes at death.

thine Holy One] One who is the object or bearer of divine grace, or even the bestower of grace. It must be referred to Christ on the authority of St. Peter and St. Paul (marg. reff.), who assume this application as a fact universally admitted by those whom they address.

corruption] This rendering should be retained in preference to "pit," i.e. grave; a translation which makes God promise that His Holy One shall not be buried, and contradicts St. Peter and St. Paul (Acts ii. 31, xiii. 35-37). The meaning was so clear to the Jewish Rabbins, that, unable as they were to reconcile it with David's history, they invented the fable that his body was preserved from corruption.

11. *the path of life*] The way to eternal life in contrast to corruption and the abode in Sheol. That life is the life in God, of which the holy become partakers when admitted into His Presence, where Christ seated at His right hand dispenses pleasures (the same word as in v. 6) for evermore.

XVII. This Psalm is generally admitted to have the marked characteristics of David's early style. In some points it resembles the preceding Psalm, but it was evidently written under different circumstances: in both there is the declaration of entire faith in a future life (which may probably account for their juxtaposition in the Psalter); but in this there is a deeper tone of indignation, the writer is sorely tried inwardly (vv. 3-5), and outwardly oppressed

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence ;
Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 Thou hast proved mine heart ;

^aThou hast visited me in the night ;

^bThou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing ;

I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips

I have kept me *from* the paths of the destroyer.

5 ^cHold up my goings in thy paths,

That my footsteps ¹slip not.

6 ^dI have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God :

Incline thine ear unto me, and *hear* my speech.

7 ^eShow thy marvellous lovingkindness,

O thou ²that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in *thee*

From those that rise up *against* them.

8 ^fKeep me as the apple of the eye,

^gHide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9 From the wicked ³that oppress me,

From ⁴my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.

10 ^hThey are inclosed in their own fat :

¹ Heb. *be not moved*.

² Or, *that saved them which trust in thee from those*

that rise up against thy right hand.

³ Heb. *that waste me*.

⁴ Heb. *my enemies against the soul*.

^a Ps. 16. 17.

^b Job 23. 10.

Ps. 26. 2.

Zech. 13. 9.

Mal. 3. 2.

¹ Pet. 1. 7.

^c Ps. 119. 131.

^d Ps. 118. 2.

^e Ps. 31. 21

^f Deut. 32. 10

Zech. 2. 8.

^g Ruth 2. 12.

Ps. 36. 7.

& 57. 1.

Matt. 23. 37.

^h Deut. 32. 15.

Job 15. 27.

Ps. 73. 7.

and persecuted, which renders probable the supposition that the Psalm is to be assigned to the period when Saul pursued after David (1 Sam. xxiii. 26).

The Psalm is called a prayer by David himself (v. 1), and devout supplication is its special characteristic. Four other Psalms (lxxxvi., xc., cii., cxlii) bear the same title: see also the subscription to lxxii. 20. The structure is regular, with clauses of three lines each; but the divisions are not strongly marked.

1. *the right*] *i.e.* Hear and vindicate the righteous cause. David's cause was that of righteousness, which was assailed in him.

The "cry" expresses the loudness and earnestness of the entreaty; "prayer" the devoutness of the feeling to which it gave utterance. Both words are thus combined in lxi. 1; Jer. vii. 16.

feigned lips] Or, "lips without guile." See the marginal rendering.

2. *the things that are equal*] Or, **uprightness**; *i.e.* the uprightness of the supplicant for justice.

3. This verse expresses the consciousness not of sinfulness, but of sincerity; the Psalmist needs, and invites, the fiery process of testing and refining, but with a certainty that it will result in a recognition of his integrity.

tried] *i.e.* "assayed" me, as gold or silver, by fire.

shalt find nothing] **Lit.**, "Thou wilt not find," *i.e.* any dross, any guilty remembrance or purpose.

I am purposed] Deliberate purpose under strong provocation (cp. Jer. iv. 28).

Another reading and rendering of the words "and shalt find...purposed" is, "and shalt find no guilty thought in me. My mouth &c."

4. *Concerning the works of men*] Or, **man**, lit. Adam; the natural man. As to his acts as a natural man, he has been guided by God's word, and kept himself from the ways of the violent. David may possibly refer to a special temptation to do a violent and cruel act (cp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 10).

5. *Hold up &c.*] Rather, "(by) holding fast to Thy tracks in my goings my footsteps have not been moved," *i.e.* David keeping steadily in tracks marked for him by God is preserved from overthrow. The word "moved" (see x. 6, xv. 5) implies a violent shock.

7. The marginal rendering of this verse, which agrees with the Prayer-Book, is probably correct, but the A.V. gives a good sense, and is defended by able critics.

8. *apple of the eye*] The Hebrew expression is even more full of tenderness; "the pupil, daughter of the eye." The ancient Egyptians had the term "child of the eye" for darling.

deadly enemies] Lit. "enemies in soul," *i.e.* in fierce intent, lusting for my destruction.

10. *They are inclosed in their own fat*] Lit. "they have closed their fat," *i.e.* their heart, which from self-indulgence is become a mere feelingless lump of fat (see cxix.

- ¹ 1 Sam. 2. 3. With their mouth they ¹ speak proudly.
 Ps. 31. 18. 11 They have now ² compassed us in our steps :
¹ 1 Sam. 23. 26. ¹ They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth ;
¹ Ps. 10. 8, 9, 10. 12 ¹ Like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey,
 And as it were a young lion ² lurking in secret places.
 13 Arise, O LORD, ³ disappoint him, cast him down :
^m Isai. 10. 5. Deliver my soul from the wicked, ^m *which is* thy sword :
ⁿ Ps. 73. 12. 14 ⁵ From men *which are* thy hand, O LORD,
 From men of the world, ⁿ *which have* their portion in *this* life,
 And whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure* :
⁶ They are full of children,
 And leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.
^o 1 John 3. 2. 15 As for me, ^o I will behold thy face in righteousness :
^p Ps. 4. 6, 7. ^p I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.
 & 16. 11.
 & 65. 4.

PSALM XVIII.

- ^{*} Ps. 36, To the chief Musician, *A Psalm of David*, ^{*} the servant of the LORD, who spake unto
 title. the LORD the words of ^{*} this song in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the
^{*} 2 Sam. 22. hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul : And he said,
^a Ps. 144. 1. 1 I ^a WILL love thee, O LORD, my strength.

¹ Heb. *The likeness of him*
(that is, of every one of
them) is as a lion that de-
sireth to ravin.

² Heb. *sitting.*
³ Heb. *prevent his face.*
⁴ Or, *by thy sword.*

⁵ Or, *From men by thine*
hand.
⁶ Or, *their children are full.*

70). They are no longer capable of kindly emotions, or they exclude them altogether. On the general connexion between the physical and moral symptoms, see marg. ref.

11. *compassed*]. Cp. marg. ref. *bowing down to the earth*]. Or, “to cast me down to the earth.” The figure refers to the lion (v. 12) which fixes his eye on the prey, so that it falls paralysed by terror.

12. One person is especially designated. The epithet is applied to Saul in 2 Sam. i. 23.

13. *disappoint*]. Rather (as in marg.) “prevent.” “come before his face.” The lion has its face towards the prey, in act to spring, the LORD is entreated to stand suddenly in front of it, and arrest its leap.

cast him down]. Or, “fasten him down;” press down the crouching beast, keep him in the base, treacherous position he has assumed.

which is thy sword...which are thy hand (v. 14)] Better as in the margin. The A. V. represents the wicked as instruments in God’s hand; a true thought in itself (Isai. x. 5), but not adapted to the context, in which David’s enemies are acting *against* God.

14. *men of the world*]. i.e. “The children of this world” (Luke xvi. 8), men who not only live in the world, but who are of it, deriving from it their motives and objects, all that is due to them, all that they care to receive (Luke xvi. 25).

hid treasure]. Or, simply “stores,” food stored, by God’s providence for all His crea-

tures, used to satiety by those “who have lived in pleasure upon the earth” (Jas. v. 5).

leave the rest &c.] Both the Psalmist and Job (xxi. 17) agree as to the course of God’s providence; both repudiate the doctrine of retribution in this life exactly corresponding to man’s deserts.

15. David sets against the prosperity of his enemies the single fact that he is sure of a vindication of his righteousness in God’s own Presence. His enemies are satisfied with this life; when David awakes out of that sleep of death, which will be the end of all happiness to them, he will be satisfied with God’s likeness, the form of God Himself, beheld and realized in the Person of the Son. This text therefore declares, what is elsewhere clearly intimated, David’s firm belief in a futurity of blessedness reserved for the true children of God.

XVIII. This Psalm was composed after the complete subjugation of David’s foreign enemies, when all traces of opposition from Saul’s family had passed away (see inscription), and for the express purpose of a public thanksgiving and celebration of a series of victories. It also appears to have been written before the great sin was committed which threw a dark shadow over the spirit of the king and the state of his kingdom. These and other notices make it highly probable that it belongs to the period described in 2 Sam. vii. ix., special references to which will be pointed out in the notes. The internal indications of authorship, and the external evidence, are so convincing, that critics of all schools accept it as the

- 2 The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ;
My God, ¹my strength, ^bin whom I will trust ; ^b Heb. 2. 13.
My buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower.
3 I will call upon the LORD, ^c*who is worthy* to be praised : ^c Ps. 76. 4.
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.
4 ^dThe sorrows of death compassed me,
And the floods of ²ungodly men made me afraid. ^d Ps. 116. 3.
5 The ³sorrows of hell compassed me about :
The snares of death prevented me.
6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried unto my God :
He heard my voice out of his temple,
And my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.
7 ^eThen the earth shook and trembled ; ^e Acts 4. 31.
The foundations also of the hills moved
And were shaken, because he was wroth.
8 There went up a smoke ⁴out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured :

¹ Heb. *my rock*.² Heb. *Belial*.³ Or, *cords*.⁴ Heb. *by his*.

production of David ; the Psalm, indeed, by which the authenticity of other Psalms may be tested. The whole spirit of the king, as head of the Theocracy, pervades the composition.

The Psalm is not directly Messianic, but typical bearings throughout point to God's anointed Son, in Whom the promises to David and his seed have an absolute fulfilment.

the servant of the LORD] This designation is often given to David, both in the Psalms and in the Historical Books. It marks an office, and is applied to Prophets, and specially to persons, such as Moses, Joshua, and David, who severally were entrusted with God's work in critical epochs.

spake...the words of this song] The same formula is used in Deut. xxxi. 30. The Hebrew word for "song" denotes a hymn adapted for recitation or singing with the accompaniment of the lyre. Cp. Ex. xv. 1 ; Num. xxi. 17.

1. *I will love thee*] The Hebrew word denotes tender affection, and is elsewhere used of God's love to man, not of man's to God. It marks a high development of the spiritual instinct.

2. In this verse there are seven appellations of Jehovah, the mystic number which in sacred things symbolizes perfection. The climax should be noted : first the "rock" (or cliff) as the place of refuge ; then the **fastness** as a place carefully fortified ; then the personal "deliverer," without whose intervention escape would have been impossible. The second half of the verse varies the expressions ; "my strength" or **rock** (a different word from cliff), used of Horeb (Ex. xvii. 6) and of Jeliövah (Deut. xxxii. 4 note) ; "my buckler" or shield, first used in reference to Abram (Gen. xv. 1 ; see iii. 3

note) ; "the horn of my salvation," or "my horn of salvation," whether as symbol of strength or of height and dignity (cxii. 9 ; 1 Sam. ii. 10 ; and cp. Luke i. 69) ; lastly, "my high tower," or mountain castle, a figure which combines the idea of perfect security and dignity.

4. *The sorrows of death*] Or, **the cords of death**. Death is here represented as a hunter (see v. 5) : he surrounds the field in which he seeks his prey with a hunting net. The reading in 2 Sam. xxii. 5 is different ("waves" A.V. or "breakers"), the same metaphor being kept throughout the two clauses of the verse. So too the passage seems to have been read by Jonah (ii. 5), who probably had this and the two following verses in his mind.

Floods of ungodly men] **Floods of Belial**, the abstraction or personification of destructive wickedness. David is surrounded by the hunter's lines, while all chance of escape is cut off by rushing torrents.

5. The cords which (in v. 4 ; see note) surrounded the field are now drawn close (different verbs are used in the Hebrew), Death stands in front (cp. xvii. 13 note) in the act of casting the net.

7-15. This passage, unsurpassed in sublimity and grandeur, describes a Theophany, or personal manifestation of the Lord. Natural phenomena supply the imagery. In the brief account of David's victories (2 Sam. viii.) no mention is made of natural convulsions, but it is hard to resist the impression that the Psalmist describes a storm which he saw, and in which he realized the outward manifestation of God's Presence. Many great battles have been fought amidst the strife of the elements, and that not merely in sacred history (cp. Josh. x. 10, 11).

Coals were kindled by it.

- ^f Ps. 144. 5. 9 ^fHe bowed the heavens also, and came down :
And darkness *was* under his feet.
- ^o Ps. 90. 1. 10 ^oAnd he rode upon a cherub, and did fly :
^a Ps. 104. 3. Yea, ^ahe did fly upon the wings of the wind.
- ⁱ Ps. 97. 2. 11 He made darkness his secret place ;
ⁱHis pavilion round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick
clouds of the skies.
- ^k Ps. 97. 3. 12 ^kAt the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed,
Hail *stones* and coals of fire.
- ⁱ Ps. 29. 3. 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens,
And the Highest gave ⁱhis voice ;—hail *stones* and coals of fire.
- ^m Josh. 10. 10. 14 ^mYea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ;
^{Ps. 144. 6.} And he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
^{Isai. 30. 30.} 15 ⁿThen the channels of waters were seen,
^{Ex. 15. 8.} And the foundations of the world were discovered
^{Ps. 106. 9.} At thy rebuke, O LORD,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
- ^o Ps. 144. 7. 16 ^oHe sent from above, he took me,
He drew me out of ⁱmany waters.
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
And from them which hated me : for they were too strong for
me.
- 18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity :
But the LORD was my stay.
- ^p Ps. 31. 8. 19 ^pHe brought me forth also into a large place ;
^{& 118. 5.} He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- ^q 1 Sam. 24. 19. 20 ^qThe LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness ;
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed
me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.

¹ Or, *great waters*.

9. *He bowed the heavens*] So in the storm the clouds lower, descending and resting on the hill-tops.

10. *a cherub*] A collective noun meaning Cherubim, who are represented as bearing the throne of God (cp. Ezek. i. 4-28 ; Gen. iii. 24 note), it may be as symbolizing the agencies of nature. The rising storm is to the Prophet like the approach of chariot-wheels rolling over the vault of cloud.

fly . . fly] Different Hebrew words. The second is very rare ; it is used in Deut. (xxviii. 49) of the swoop of an eagle.

11. The Lord is represented as sitting over the battle-field amidst accumulated masses of cloud, unseen, but near.

12. The lightning breaks the clouds, they are rifted, dispersed in scattered masses, down rushes the hail (cp. Job xxxviii. 22, 23), mingled with fiery flakes (cp. Ex. ix. 23). Hail is rare in Palestine, but when it falls, causes terrible destruction.

14. The effect of the storm. The enemy recognize the indications of wrath : a sudden panic seizes them, and they are at once "discomfited" (Ex. xiv. 24).

15. *channels of waters*] Properly the beds of torrents flowing through a rocky district (see xlii. 1 note). The rocks were cleft, and the waters instantaneously swallowed up. The words used throughout this description recall Ex. xiv. and xv., a passage certainly present to David's mind.

16-19. David now relates in plain terms the results of the divine judgment, referring to figures previously employed.

16. The reference to the deliverance of Moses, the "servant of God," is clear. The word rendered "He drew me" occurs nowhere but in Ex. ii. 10 (see note) ; where it is used to explain the meaning of the name Moses. The "many waters" points back to v. 4.

19. *a large place*] i.e. Into open ground, not compassed by floods or nets (vr. 5, 6).

20-24. The moral cause of the interposition, which proves and rewards innocence.

21. *wickedly departed from my God*] David uses many other words in the penitential Psalms to describe his own guilt, but never

- 22 For all his judgments *were* before me,
And I did not put away his statutes from me.
- 23 I was also upright ¹before him,
And I kept myself from mine iniquity.
- 24 ²Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my
righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands ²in his eyesight.
- 25 ³With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful;
With an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;
26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;
And ⁴with the froward thou wilt ³shew thyself froward.
- 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people;
But wilt bring down ⁴high looks.
- 28 ⁵For thou wilt light my ⁴candle:
The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.
- 29 For by thee I have ⁵run through a troop;
And by my God have I leaped over a wall.
- 30 As for God, ⁶his way is perfect:—²the word of the LORD is
⁶tried:
He is a buckler ⁶to all those that trust in him.
- 31 ⁶For who is God save the LORD?—or who is a rock save our
God?
- 32 It is God that ⁶girdeth me with strength,
And maketh my way perfect.
- 33 ⁶He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
And ⁶setteth me upon my high places
- 34 ⁶He teacheth my hands to war,
So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.
- ¹ Heb. *with*. ³ Or, *wrestle*. ⁵ Or, *broken*.
² Heb. *before his eyes*. ⁴ Or, *lamp*, Job 29. 3. ⁶ Or, *refined*.

¹ 1 Sam. 26. 23.

¹ 1 K. 8. 32.

¹ Lev. 26. 23,
24, 27, 28.
Prov. 3. 34.
² Ps. 101. 5.
Prov. 6. 17.
³ Job 18. 6.

⁴ Deut. 32. 4.
Dan. 4. 37.
Rev. 15. 3.
⁵ Ps. 12. 6.
⁶ 119. 140.
Prov. 30. 5.
⁷ Ps. 17. 7.
⁸ Deut. 32. 31, 39.
1 Sam. 2. 2.
Ps. 86. 8.
Isai. 45. 5.
⁹ Ps. 91. 2.
¹⁰ 2 Sam. 2. 18.
¹¹ Deut. 32. 13.
¹² 33. 29.
¹³ Ps. 144. 1.

uses this, which implies wilful and persistent wickedness.

23. *before him*] Rather as in the marg., "with Him," in my relations to Him.

from mine iniquity] A very important statement. It recognizes an inward tendency to sin, an inherent sinfulness, but David kept himself in guard against it.

25-30. A general view of God's dealings with the just and the unjust.

26. *froward...froward*] Or, "with the perverse Thou wilt show Thyself froward." The word rendered "show thyself froward" is derived from a root meaning "to twist" (cp. also the marg.); "show thyself tortuous" comes nearer to the original. The Lord so deals with the perverse as to bring them into inextricable perplexity and to overthrow them.

28. *candle*] Or, *lamp*. The word is specially used of the golden candlestick in the Tabernacle; but generally also as a symbol of life and prosperity; see marg. ref. David himself is called the light of Israel (2 Sam. xxi. 17; cp. 1 K. xi. 36, xv. 4; Ps. cxxii. 17).

29. *run through*] With reference to the speed of his pursuit and onslaught.

a troop] Specially used of light armed troops sent to plunder an invaded country (see 1 Sam. xxx. 8, 15).

a wall] David may refer to the storming of Zion (see 2 Sam. v. 6, 7, and cp. Joel ii. 7). The Hebrew word for "leaped" is used specially of the swift bounding of the hind (Song Sol. ii. 8; Isai. xxxv. 6).

30. *tried*] See marg. and xii. 6 note.

32. *my way perfect*] i.e. Perfect as His way (v. 30). Cp. Matt. v. 48.

33. *hinds' feet*] See v. 29 note: cp. Hab. iii. 19. David appears in these verses as a born ruler over men: endued with a sinewy frame, capable of immense efforts and unexhausted by prolonged exertions: yet unlike many heroes of classic antiquity, ascribing this natural endowment to the special favour of Jehovah.

my high places] i.e. "My dominions with their fortresses, rocks, and mountains;" but with primary reference to the abode of the hind, remarkable alike for speed and "surefootedness."

34. *so that &c.*] Or, *so that my arms bend a bow of bronze*: bronze, highly tempered and elastic, not steel, or brass, was used for bows by the Egyptians and Israelites. ••

- 35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation:
And thy right hand hath holden me up,
And ¹thy gentleness hath made me great.
- 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
²That ³my feet did not slip.
- 37 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them:
Neither did I turn again till they were consumed.
- 38 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise:
They are fallen under my feet.
- 39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle:
Thou hast ⁴subdued under me those that rose up against me.
- 40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies;
That I might destroy them that hate me.
- 41 They cried, but *there was* none to save them:
⁵Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind:
I did ⁶cast them out as the dirt in the streets.
- 42 ⁷Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people;
And ⁸thou hast made me the head of the heathen:
⁹A people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.
- 43 ¹⁰As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me:
The strangers ¹¹shall ¹²submit themselves unto me.
- 44 ¹³The strangers shall fade away,
And be afraid out of their close places.
- 45 The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;
And let the God of my salvation be exalted.
- 46 *It is* God that ¹⁴avengeth me,
¹⁵And ¹⁶subdueth the people under me.
- 47 He delivereth me from mine enemies:
Yea, ¹⁷thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me:
Thou hast delivered me from the ¹⁸violent man.

¹ Or, *with thy meekness thou hast multiplied me.*

² Heb. *mine ancles.*

³ Heb. *caused to bow.*

⁴ Heb. *At the hearing of*

the ear.

⁵ Heb. *the sons of the stranger.*

⁶ Or, *yield feigned obedience.*

⁷ Heb. *lie.*

⁸ Heb. *giveth avengements for me.*

⁹ Or, *destroyeth.*

¹⁰ Or, *man of violence.*

35. *thy gentleness*] Or, "condescension;" lit. humility, the correlative quality in man.

36. *Thou hast enlarged*] Or, made wide room for my steps, clearing away all hindrances.

that my feet] and *my ancles do not slip*: the word denotes unsteadiness, a giving way owing to physical weakness.

39. *subdued*] *cast down*; see xvii. 13 note.

40. *Thou hast also given me the necks*] *i.e.* caused them to turn back before me. Cp. Ex. xxiii. 27, marg. rendering.

41. This verse is thought to refer to a victory over domestic enemies, rather than over the heathen, who would not call on the LORD (*i.e.* Jehovah): but, so far as knowledge is concerned, the fact that the name of Jehovah was familiar to the Moabites is proved by its occurrence on the now famous inscription of Mesha: and, after the final defeat of Moab, that knowledge may have issued in fear of Him Whose superiority to Chemosh was proved by their own test of might (cp. Judg. xi. 24).

43. *the head of the heathen*] Or, "head of nations." David saw in his foreign conquests a pledge of the fulfilment of Messianic prophecies. See especially ii. 8.

44. *submit*] Or, *flatter me*, lit. "lie" to me, *i.e.* as in marg. "yield feigned obedience," the obedience of fear.

45. *be afraid*] The Hebrew word occurs only in this passage. It probably means, "will flee trembling."

47. *avengeth me*] See marg., or, "awardeth retributions to me" (cp. 2 Sam. iv. 9-12); an important passage as bearing upon David's repudiation of private acts of vengeance.

subdueth] The Hebrew word occurs twice only (see marg. ref.) in this sense. It has the special meaning of keeping in subjection, as a flock to the shepherd.

48. *the violent man*] The expression may be general; but probably it points to Saul, the chief of David's persecutors, and, as such, expressly named in the very ancient, if not contemporary, inscription.

49 "Therefore will I 'give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen,

And sing praises unto thy name.

50 "Great deliverance giveth he to his king;

And sheweth mercy to his anointed,

To David, and to his seed 'for evermore.

* Ps. 144. 10.

* 2 Sam. 7.
12-16, 26-29.

PSALM XIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1 THE "heavens declare the glory of God;

And the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech,

And night unto night sheweth knowledge.

* Gen. 1. 6.
Isai. 40. 22.
Rom. 1. 19.

¹ Or, *confess*.

49. St. Paul (marg. ref.) applies this to our Lord. David speaks with a consciousness that his mission, as head of the Theocracy, and forerunner and type of Christ, was not confined to Israel: it involved the proclamation of God's might and goodness to the heathen, with a view to the fulfilment of the original promise to Abram (Gen. xii. 2, 3), and the extension of God's mercies to all nations.

50. The close of the hymn refers to the solemn declaration communicated through Nathan (marg. ref.).

David] The only passage in which David names himself; either with reference to the special promise through Nathan, or because the Psalm was intended for public recitation, reminding the whole nation of the grounds on which their allegiance to the house of David rested.

The question whether the text of this Psalm is more ancient or more accurate in the Book of Samuel than here has been much discussed. Both texts have internal proofs of independence and originality: it is now admitted that neither could have been taken from the other: nor are the deviations generally such as could be accounted for by inaccurate transcription. The most natural and probable explanation is, that David towards the close of his reign prepared a revision for public recitation.

XIX. This Psalm recognizes the vivid contrast and the inner harmony between the results of natural and revealed religion. The heavens declare the glory, but not the will of God: that is known only by His Law, revealed to man as the perfect expression of that will, for his conversion, instruction, and guidance.

The Psalm would appear to belong to the same period of David's life as the preceding, with which it has an intimate connexion. In xviii. 43, 49, the king declares his mission to the heathen; in this he dwells first upon the preparation for such work by natural agencies, then upon the instruments by which it could be effected (cp. the language of our Lord and His Apostles; Matt.

v. 45, vi. 26-33; Acts xiv. 15-17, xvii. 24-31); David, it may be for this reason, calls himself a "servant" of God, *rv*. 11, 13. The Psalm has other indications of belonging to the king's sunny and hopeful manhood. Here (*rv*. 12) as in other early Psalms (see xviii. 23 note), he has the consciousness of inherent and secret sinfulness, and of the danger of falling into wilful sin, but it is clear that he has not committed "the great transgression."

There is a marked difference between the style of the two portions of the Psalm (*rv*. 1-6, 7-end); but in both there is a fundamental identity of structure, each consisting of fourteen clauses, arranged in six or eight strophes of nearly equal length. The former portion is richer in imagery; the latter, in deep and holy feelings, movements of a heart stirred to its depths by God's Law.

1. *declare... sheweth*] Or, "recount"... "proclaimeth."

God] Heb., "El;" a name which denotes the majesty and power of God. It is the only name which occurs in the first part of this Psalm, and here once only; the name Jehovah being used, exclusively, seven times in the second part. David celebrates the "glory of El" (the God of nature) and the "law of Jehovah" (the God of the Covenant. Ex. vi. 3).

2. *uttereth*] Lit. "pouresth forth." Each day overflows with utterances, which it transmits to its successor. The word is used specially of religious and prophetic utterances (cp. lxxviii. 2; Prov. i. 23).

sheweth] Properly "quickeneth," "keepeth alive" (Job xv. 17, xxxvi. 2); i.e. gives a living quickening knowledge; as though contemplation of the starry firmament awakened deeper, more spiritual thoughts than the brightness of day. "Speech" denotes an outward communication; "knowledge," the inward apprehension. Day and night thus occupied are "like two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God."

- 3 *There is no speech nor language,*
¹² *Where their voice is not heard.*
- ^b Rom. 10. 19. 4 ^{b3} *Their line is gone out through all the earth,*
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
- 5 *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,*
^c Eccles. 1. 5. ^c *And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*
- 6 *His going forth is from the end of the heaven,*
And his circuit unto the ends of it:
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.
- ^d Ps. 111. 7. 7 ^d *The law of the LORD is perfect,* ⁵ *converting the soul:*
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
- 8 *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart:*
^e Ps. 12. 6. ^e *The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*
- ^f Ps. 13. 3. 9 *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever:*
The judgments of the LORD are ⁶ *true and righteous altogether.*
- ^g Ps. 119. 72, 127. 10 *More to be desired are they than gold,* ⁷ *yea, than much fine gold:*
- Prov. 8. 10, 11, 19. ¹ Or, *without these their voice is heard.* ² Heb. *without their voice heard.* ³ Or, *Their rule, or, direction.* ⁴ Or, *doctrine.* ⁵ Or, *restoring.* ⁶ Heb. *truth.*

3. The translation of A. V. gives a clear sense; it is supported by the ancient Versions, and is grammatically defensible. Another rendering is "There is no speech, there are no words, all inaudible is their voice;" but this introduces a thought which is scarcely in accordance with the preceding and following verses.

4. *Their line*] The word translated "line" has in Hebrew the special sense of a boundary line marking the extent of dominion; it is thus understood in this passage by many. The more general, and the oldest, interpretation is "sound," but it is not supported by Hebrew usage. In other passages "line" means a rule of conduct, a precept or decree; a sense not unsuitable here; the decree of the heavens goes forth, proclaiming the glory of God and the duty of worshipping Him.

their words] The Hebrew again (cp. v. 2) recalls a word frequent in the Book of Job; a fact of some moment, as bearing upon the antiquity of this Psalm and of that Book; and as indicating the influence of Job upon David's mind, an influence perhaps specially felt in dealing with natural religion.

5. *bridegroom*] The symbol of youthful vigour and happiness, or of the beginning of a new life.

out of his chamber] Cp. Joel ii. 16.

as a strong man] The epithet is applied to the sun in Judg. v. 31; elsewhere to God, of Whom the sun is a type.

6. The imagery of this verse should not be pressed as presenting a theory of the earth's form.

nothing hid] The heat of the sun, which is the condition of physical life, reaches as far as the teaching of the heavens; they instruct all, the sun quickens all. Hence the fitness of the symbol and of the application

to the Lord Christ and His Apostles (Rom. x. 18).

The connexion between the two parts of this Psalm is that of the analogy between the order and light of the universe and God's moral Law.

7. The praise of God's Law now follows in a rapid flow of short clauses, each with a *double beat*, expressing the warm emotion of the Psalmist's heart. The first word involves all that can be said, the Law is "perfect," a complete revelation of God's will (cp. Rom. vii. 12).

The order in which the six words (vv. 7-9) describing God's Law occur should be observed. 1. The "Law," of which the fundamental principle is instruction. 2. The "testimony," i.e. warning; God's appeal to the conscience, bearing witness to the Law. 3. "Statutes," or, more exactly, visitations, securing obedience, or checking infringements of the "Law." 4. "Commandments," i.e. precepts, better understood as man advances under the teaching of the "Law." 5. The "fear of God," the settled habit of the soul informed by the "Law." 6. The "judgments," the final awards of the Giver of the "Law." *converting*] Or, as in marg. ^{Lit.} bringing back (the soul) from ignorance and sin; the word involves the idea of deliverance and refreshment.

the testimony] Used specially of the Decalogue (Exod. xxv. 16); which supplies what is needful to the "simple," i.e. one whose consciousness or reason is as yet undeveloped.

8. *enlightening the eyes*] See marg. ref. note, and cp. v. 10 with 1 Sam. xiv. 27. The expression includes the gift of comfort and joy as well as of knowledge.

9. *The fear of the LORD*] Godly fear, the reverential fear inseparable from love.

- ^aSweeter also than honey and ¹the honeycomb.
 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
And ⁴in keeping of them *there is* great reward.
 12 ^kWho can understand *his* errors?
^lCleanse thou me from ^msecret faults.
 13 ⁿKeep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
^oLet them not have dominion over me:
 Then shall I be upright,
 And I shall be innocent from ²the great transgression.
 14 ^pLet the words of my mouth,
 And the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight,
 O LORD, ³my strength, and my ^qredeemer.

PSALM XX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 THE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble;
^aThe name of the God of Jacob ⁴defend thee;
 2 Send ⁵thee help from ^bthe sanctuary,
 And ⁶strengthen thee out of Zion;
 3 Remember all thy offerings,
 And ⁷accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.
 4 ^cGrant thee according to thine own heart,
 And fulfil all thy counsel.

¹ Heb. *the dropping of honeycombs.*² Or, *my*.³ Heb. *my rock*, Ps. 18. 1.⁴ Heb. *set thee on an high place.*⁵ Heb. *thy help*.⁶ Heb. *support thee.*⁷ Heb. *turn to ashes: or, make fat.*^a Ps. 119. 103.⁴ Prov. 29. 18.^k Ps. 40. 12.^l Lev. 4. 2,

&c.

^m Ps. 90. 8.ⁿ Gen. 20. 6.¹ Sam. 25.

32, &c.

^o Ps. 119. 133.^p Rom. 6. 12,

14.

^q Ps. 51. 15.^r Isai. 43. 14.

& 44. 6.

& 47. 4.

¹ Thess. 1.

10.

^a Prov. 18. 10.^b 1 K. 6. 16.^c Chr. 20. 8.

Ps. 73. 17.

^c Ps. 21. 2.

12. The Psalmist applies the Law to himself:—"As for errors, sins of ignorance, or infirmity, who can discern them?" "Secret" or "hidden sins," need cleansing, *i.e.* both pardon and expiation.

13. *presumptuous sins*] The sins, manifested and ever-varying, declared to be unpardonable (Num. xv. 30); in contradiction from sins of ignorance. The difference is not in the act but in the intention.

the great transgression] The word "great" is emphatic, guilt matured, fully developed. May not this earnest, touching prayer indicate an inward consciousness of liability to the special temptation of the king?

14. *my redeemer*] When applied to God, the expression has always the sense of a deliverer, Who maintains the cause of His own people, and ransoms, or, more generally, saves them. • See Job xix. 25 note.

XX. This Psalm and the following are closely connected. This contains the supplications of the people on behalf of the king, going forth on a martial expedition; Ps. xxi. expresses their joy at his triumph. The special notices (*vv.* 7, 8), seem to point to the war with the Syrians (2 Sam. x. 17-19), but are suitable to any of the foreign wars which occupied so large a portion of David's reign. Both Psalms are attributed to David in the inscriptions. See also *v.* 2 note. They were evidently composed for public and liturgical recitation; and were probably sung by the priests and the people, or their repre-

sentatives, in the Court, or at the gate of the Tabernacle.

This Psalm has a genuine Messianic character, if not as directly referring to the future King of Israel, yet as idealizing the anointed representative of the Theocracy.

1. *defend thee*] The marginal rendering is more accurate; the people pray not merely for the safety, but for the triumph of their king, that he may be set on high, raised over his enemies.

2. *help*] Better, *Thy help*, as in the margin, *i.e.* the help on which the king might depend. Cp. xxii. 1, and 1 K. viii. 30.

sanctuary] The word suits the reign of David, when the Sanctuary was fixed in Jerusalem, and the Temple not yet built.

3. *Remember*] The word has a special reference to the offering which the priest burnt upon the Altar, as a *memorial*, an appeal to God to remember the giver. See Lev. ii. 1, 2 notes; Acts x. 4.

thy offerings] The king offered sacrifices in person, especially on great occasions, such as the beginning of a war, or before a battle. There was no interference with the proper functions of the priesthood in this. The offerings consisted both of fine flour with oil and frankincense, and whole Burnt-offerings, representing the gratitude and absolute devotion of the worshippers.

accept] Lit. as the second rendering in the marg. The people pray that God may regard the offerings as "fat," *i.e.* befitting the occasion, the best that the king could present.

- ^d Ps. 9. 14. 5 We will ^drejoice in thy salvation,
^e Ex. 17. 15. And ^ein the name of our God we will set up *our* banners:
 Ps. 60. 4. The LORD fulfil all thy petitions.
- ^f Ps. 2. 2. 6 Now know I that the LORD saveth ^fhis anointed;
 He will hear him ^ffrom his holy heaven
²With the saving strength of his right hand.
- ^g Ps. 33. 16, 17. 7 ^gSome *trust* in chariots, and some in horses:
 Prov. 21. 31. ^hBut we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
 Isai. 31. 1. 8 They are brought down and fallen:
^h 2 Chr. 32. 8. But we are risen, and stand upright.
- 9 Save, LORD:—let the king hear us when we call.

PSALM XXI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 THE king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD;
 And ^ain thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
- ^a Ps. 20. 5, 6. 2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
^b Ps. 20. 4, 5. And hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.
- ^c 2 Sam. 12. 30. 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness:
 1 Chr. 20. 2. Thou ^csettest a crown of pure gold on his head.
- ^d Ps. 61. 5, 6. 4 ^dHe asked life of thee, and thou gavest *it* him,
^e 2 Sam. 7. 19. ^eEven length of days for ever and ever.
- ^f Ps. 91. 16. 5 His glory *is* great in thy salvation:
 Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.
- ^f Ps. 16. 11. 6 For thou hast ³made him most blessed for ever:
^g Acts 2. 28. ^gThou hast ⁴made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.
- ^g Ps. 16. 8. 7 For the king trusteth in the LORD,
^h 1 Sam. 31. 3. And through the mercy of the most High he ^gshall not be moved.
- ⁱ Mal. 4. 1. 8 Thine hand shall ^hfind out all thine enemies:
^k Ps. 56. 1, 2. Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
- ⁱ Ps. 18. 8. 9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger:
 Isai. 26. 11. The LORD shall ^kswallow them up in his wrath,
^l And the fire shall devour them.
- ¹ Heb. *from the heaven of his holiness.* ^{the salvation of his right hand. ^{ings,} Gen. 12. 2. Ps. 72. 17.}
- ² Heb. *by the strength of* ³ Heb. *set him to be bless-* ⁴ Heb. *gladdened him with joy,*

5. *rejoice*] Or "shout;" the word expresses the jubilant shout of a host assured of victory.

6. *Now know I*] These words are either spoken by the king in person, or by the High-Priest representing the nation.

7. *chariots*] The prohibition against keeping numerous war-horses was observed by David. In a struggle with nations formidable for their chariotry (see 2 Sam. viii. 4, x. 18), the best and surest defence was a well-trained army of foot soldiers.

8. The verse represents the anticipated result as already achieved; the future victory is realized by faith.

9. Some prefer, "Jehovah save the king, may He answer us when we call."

XXI. The Messianic character, noted in the preceding Psalm, is brought out far more distinctly in this, which although directly applicable to special circumstances in the Ammonitish and Syrian campaign, goes far beyond the occasion, and describes

aspirations and convictions which could only be realized in the ideal head of the Theocracy.

1. *The king*] "King-Messiah" (Targum).

2. *desire*] See marg. ref.

3. *preventest*] *i.e.* The gifts are of God's free favour and grace.

a crown] Cp. marg. ref.; but the words here and in v. 4 indicate that the ideal King, the Messiah, Whom David represented, was present to the Psalmist's mind.

6. *blessed*] Rather, as in the margin, "blessings," *i.e.* a source or realization of blessings (cp. Gen. xii. 2; Eph. i. 3).

with thy countenance] Not merely by displaying goodness and favour, but by admission to personal intercourse and communion.

8-13. Verses addressed by the people, or by the High-Priest, to the king: the victory already won is to the nation an assurance of conquest over all enemies.

9. *a fiery oven*] Perhaps a reference to events connected with the conquest of Rab-

- 10 ^m Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth,
And their seed from among the children of men,
11 For they intended evil against thee:
They ^aimagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able to
perform.
12 Therefore ¹ shalt thou make them turn their ² back,
When thou shalt make ready *thine arrows* upon thy strings
against the face of them.
13 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength:
So will we sing and praise thy power.

^m 1 K. 13.
34.
Job 19. 16.
Ps. 37. 28.
& 109. 13.
Isai. 14. 20.
^a Ps. 2. 1.

PSALM XXII.

To the chief Musician upon ³ Ajeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.

- 1 MY ^a God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far ⁴ from helping me, and from ^b the words of
my roaring?

^a Matt. 27.
46.
Mark 15. 34.
^b Heb. 5. 7.

¹ Or, *thou shalt set them as
a butt*: See Job 7. 20. &

16. 12. Lam. 3. 12.
² Heb. *shoulder*.

³ Or, *the hind of the morning*.
⁴ Heb. *from my salvation*.

bah (2 Sam. xii. 31); but more probably a general denunciation of destruction to the enemies of the Lord.

12. *turn their back*] A common expression for putting to flight; cp. xviii. 40.

XXII. This Psalm sets forth completely a combination of suffering and righteousness, of utter prostration and internal sense of union with God, of grief amounting to despondency and certainty of God's future manifestation of Himself, His kingdom, and His righteousness. Its prophetic character is asserted by references in all the Evangelists (e.g. Matt. xxvii. 35; John xix. 24); by the ascription of one saying to Christ (Heb. ii. 12); above all by our Lord's own adoption on the Cross of the first words (see marg. ref.). In fact, all the circumstances of the crucifixion are described with minuteness and accuracy, while the future triumphs of the Church, extending to all nations, are depicted with equal completeness.

The Psalm is attributed to David; nor is there anything in the language or tone of thought which indicates a later origin. The figures, under which the enemies and the sufferings of the Psalmist are represented, would seem to be suggested by the circumstances of David's flight from Saul (vv. 12, 13, 16-21). In no part of this Psalm are there any signs of the consciousness of great transgression, such as occur in penitential Psalms of the king's later years. But although the imagery may have been suggested by the personal experience of the writer, it is certain that the principal traits are not exhausted in David. From first to last they are true of the Man of Sorrows, and of Him alone.

The Psalmist was moved by the Spirit of Christ, so that, whether consciously or unconsciously, he recorded his afflictions, and expressed his hopes, in language which found its perfect fulfilment in the Messiah,

of Whom David undoubtedly was, and knew himself to be, one of the very chiefest types.

The Psalm has three distinct parts. The first (vv. 1-11) describes the deep anguish of the sufferer apparently forsaken by God and despised by man, alternating with strong expressions of trust in God's holiness and love. In the second (vv. 12-21), the circumstances which cause the anguish are vividly portrayed, but the description is blended with earnest and devout supplication. In the third (vv. 22-31), the strain changes suddenly, the Psalm calls on all to join in praising God for an accomplished deliverance, and announces the extension of God's kingdom to all kindreds of the earth.

Ajeleth Shahar] Correctly rendered in the marg. The words either designate a time for the guidance of the precentor, or probably the subject-matter of the poem. The "hind" was a figure under which the Psalmist might naturally represent the character and the sufferings of the person who is set before us (cp. xviii. 33, xlii. 1; 2 Sam. i. 19): the epithet "of the morning" may possibly refer to the flight of the hind from the hunters in early dawn; or, "morning" may symbolize the deliverance from persecution (cp. Isai. lviii. 8; Hos. vi. 3; 2 Sam. xxiii. 4). Further, in Eastern poetry the horns of the roe, or of the gazelle, are used as a metaphor for the rays of the rising sun; an application which may have been in the mind of the Psalmist. While each and all of these figures are suitable to the character and position of David, they apply in a far deeper and more spiritual sense to Him of Whom David was a type.

1. *why hast thou forsaken me?*] In the person of David this would be an expression not of despair, but of amazement and of longing; the "forsaking" can but have a loving motive, to be explained ere the end come. In the person of Christ it directs

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not ;
And in the night season, and ¹am not silent.

3 But thou *art* holy,

^cDeut. 10. 21. O *thou* that inhabitest the ^cpraises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee :

They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered :

^dThey trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

6 But I *am* ^ea worm, and no man ;

^fA reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 ^gAll they that see me laugh me to scorn :

They ^hshoot out the lip, ^hthey shake the head, *saying*,

8 ⁱHe trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him :

^kLet him deliver him, ^kseeing he delighted in him.

9 ^lBut thou *art* he that took me out of the womb :

Thou ^mdidst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb :

ⁿThou *art* my God from my mother's belly.

¹ Heb. there is no silence to me.

² Heb. open.

³ Heb. He rolled himself on the Lord.

⁴ Or, if he delight in him.

⁵ Or, keptest me in safety.

attention to the cause of the infliction. The words "look upon me" in the Prayer Book Version are taken from the Vulgate, which follows the LXX.; they are probably a gloss, but shew a true appreciation of the Psalmist's longing after God.

from helping me] Rather as in the marg. To the godly man the Presence or manifestation of God is identical with "salvation." "My" is emphatic; the salvation which is mine by promise or covenant.

and from] These words are not in the original; if omitted, the meaning will be;—"far from my salvation are the words of my roaring." This follows the old Greek Versions (LXX.) Others render—"from my salvation. *Such are* the words of my roaring."

roaring] A word used properly of the roar of the lion; it denotes the loud and bitter outcry of one in the extremity of suffering (xxxii. 3; Job iii. 24).

2. *hearest not*] *answerest not*; i.e. by helping me.

am not silent] Or, "There is no silence, or cessation for me." The ceaseless moaning wins no relief (cp. Jer. xiv. 17).

3. The holiness of God is a pledge of deliverance to the godly: a point in the highest sense applicable to Him Who alone among the sons of men is "holy &c" (cp. Heb. vii. 26; Luke xxiii. 4).

inhabitest &c.] God is represented as enthroned in His Sanctuary, where the praises and adorations of His worshippers, symbolized by the streams of incense, rise continually before Him. The appeal expresses the thought that, since God is ever receiving the prayers of His people, He will surely

answer them in the person of their representative.

6. *a worm*] As in Isai. xli. 24 marg., the word in the original denotes utter helplessness and humiliation, but not personal guilt, of which there is no trace in this Messianic Psalm.

The general resemblance between this passage and the prophecies of Isaiah, in which the sufferings and humiliation of Christ are most distinctly depicted, is of extreme importance in determining the application.

8. The adoption of these words by the enemies of our Lord is testified by St. Matthew; they quoted from the LXX. version, without distinctly remembering the context. Our translation expresses the true meaning, but probably the exact rendering is "trust in (lit. roll, i.e. thy cares, upon) the LORD; let Him deliver him." The words are spoken either tauntingly by the persecutors, or refer to the habitual trust now cast in the teeth of the sufferer.

seeing] This is preferable to ^{the} marg. The Hebrew of the words, "He delighted in him," is exactly equivalent to the phrase "in Whom I am well-pleased." (Matt. iii. 17) This points directly to the "beloved Son."

9. *didst make me hope*] The Psalmist recalls the trustfulness of infancy, which he attributes to God, and longs for the same sense of security in his present troubles.

10. *I was cast upon thee*] A remarkable expression, as though the child depended wholly and exclusively on God's love for protection. All parental agencies are referred to God as their source.

thou art my God] i.e. Thou hast shewn

- 11 Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near;
For *there is* ¹none to help.
- 12 *Many bulls have compassed me:
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round. * Ps. 68. 30.
- 13 °They ²gaped upon me *with* their mouths,
As a ravening and a roaring lion. ° Job 18. 10.
Ps. 35. 21.
Lam. 2. 16.
- 14 I am poured out like water,
°And all my bones are ³out of joint:
°My heart is like wax;
It is melted ⁴in the midst of my bowels. ° Dan. 5. 6.
° Josh. 7. 5.
Job 23. 16.
- 15 °My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
And °my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death. ° Prov. 17.
22.
° Job 29. 10.
Lam. 4. 4.
John 19. 28.
° Rev. 22. 15.
- 16 For °dogs have compassed me:
The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:
°They pierced my hands and my feet. * John 19. 37.
- 17 I may tell all my bones:
°They look and stare upon me. * Luke 23.
27, 35.
° Luke 23. 34.
- 18 °They part my garments among them,
And cast lots upon my vesture.
- 19 But °be not thou far from me, O LORD:
O my strength, haste thee to help me. * ver. 11.
Ps. 10. 1.
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword;
°°My darling ⁵from the power of the °dog. ° Ps. 35. 17.
° ver. 16.

¹ Heb. *not a helper.*² Heb. *opened their mouths*³ *against me.*⁴ Or, *shattered.*⁵ Heb. *my only one.*⁶ Heb. *from the hand.*

Thyself to be my God, by constant care and love from my birth (cp. marg. reff. and Luke ii. 22, 40, 49, 52).

11. *there is none to help*] True in its full sense of Christ, when "all forsook Him and fled," and of Him only. David had most powerful helpers in all his troubles.

12. The agents of this great affliction are likened for strength, fierceness, and baseness, to bulls, lions (v. 13) and dogs (v. 16).

Bulls gather in a circle round any novel or unaccustomed object, and may be easily instigated into charging with their horns; a vivid portraiture of the rabble who were instigated to clamour for the death of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 20).

Bashan] Here the rich pasture-land of Gilead, part of the ancient kingdom of Bashan, and which was famous for the size and ferocity of its bulls, frequently taken as symbols of the luxurious and ungodly rulers of Israel (cp. Deut. xxxii. 14, 15; Ezek. xxxix. 18; Amos iv. 1).

13. Better, as in marg. The figure changes. The Psalmist sees in the foes lions, with open jaws, roaring as when about to rend their prey. Cp. Matt. xxvii. 23.

14-16. These verses contrast the exhaustion and the powerlessness of the speaker with the ferocity of his enemies. Each word recalls a distinct feature in our Lord's sufferings.

16. *dogs*] The meaner agents of cruelty (see Matt. xxvi. 67, xxvii. 27-30).

they pierced] This is the reading of all the ancient Versions except one. The fierce soldiery are depicted as piercing (*digging*, as the word literally means) the feet and hands, and nailing them to the cross.

17. *I may tell all my bones*] All the framework of the body stood out in terrible relief under the strain of Crucifixion.

they...stare upon me] "They," the people. The words, "stare upon me" have the meaning of looking with complacency or triumph on a foe. It is a phrase common in Davidic Psalms, and it occurs twice on the Moabite stone: a point of some importance, considering the connexion of David with Moab (see 1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4).

18. The act described in this verse is not applicable either to David, or to any personage whose history is recorded in the Bible, save to Him Whose disciple saw and described the fulfilment (John xix. 24).

19. *O my strength*] The Hebrew word, which occurs in no other passage, means source or substance of all strength, here with special reference to physical exhaustion. Cp. Luke xxii. 43, 44, with this verse.

20. *the sword*] This word, applicable to David in his sore distress, is equally so to our Lord. The "sword" was in fact the special symbol of the authority by which He was condemned to death. Cp. Rom. xiii. 4.

my darling] Lit. "my only one;" The term is admitted here and in the marg. *ref.*

- 2 Tim. 4.17. 21 ^aSave me from the lion's mouth :
^dIsai. 34. 7. ^aFor thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.
 Acts 4. 27. 22 ^aI will declare thy name unto my brethren :
^ePs. 40. 9. In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
 John 20. 17. 23 ^aYe that fear the LORD, praise him ;
 Rom. 8. 29. All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him ;
^fPs. 135. 19, 20. And fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted ;
^hHeb. 5. 7. Neither hath he hid his face from him ;
 1. Cor. 35. 18. But ^hwhen he cried unto him, he heard.
 & 40. 9, 10. 25 ⁱMy praise *shall be* of thee in the great congregation :
 & 111. 1. ^kI will pay my vows before them that fear him.
^lPs. 66. 13. 26 ⁱThe meek shall eat and be satisfied :
 & 116. 14. They shall praise the LORD that seek him :
 Eccles. 5. 4. Your heart ^mshall live for ever.
^mLev. 7. 11, 12, 15, 16. 27 ⁿAll the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD :
 Ps. 69. 32. ^oAnd all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
 Isai. 65. 13. 28 ⁿFor the kingdom is the LORD's :
^oJohn 6. 51. And he *is* the governor among the nations.
^pPs. 2. 8. 29 ^oAll *they that be* fat upon earth shall eat and worship :
 & 72. 11. ^rAll they that go down to the dust shall bow before him :
 Isai. 49. 6. And none can keep alive his own soul.
^qPs. 96. 7. 30 A seed shall serve him ;
^rPs. 47. 8. ^sIt shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.
 Zech. 14. 9. 31 ^tThey shall come, and shall declare his righteousness
 Matt. 6. 13. Unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.
^uPs. 45. 12.
^vIsai. 26. 19.
 Phil. 2. 10.
^wPs. 87. 6.
^xPs. 78. 6.
 & 86. 9.
 & 102. 18.
 Isai. 60. 3.
 See Rom. 3. 21, 22.

to apply to the soul, a usage peculiar to David; probably as the most precious thing belonging to man is precious; a statement true in the highest sense of Him Whose soul was "poured out unto death" as a ransom for humanity (cp. Isai. liii. 10-12).

the power of the dog] Lit. "the hand" of the persecutors or executioners.

21. *thou hast heard me*] This clause must refer to the last hour, when the fatal blow had been inflicted. When the work of the enemy is completed, and not until then, comes the answer which assures deliverance.

the unicorns] Or, "the wild bulls." See Job xxxix. 9 note.

22, 23. The whole strain changes: from the depth of humiliation, the prostration of strength, the agony of death, the dust of the grave, the speaker passes at once into a state of perfect peace and exultation. Spoken in the Person of Christ all is clear; the transition of feeling corresponds exactly to that described in the last verses of the liiird and the first part of the livth chapters of Isaiah.

22. See Heb. ii. 12, where these words are expressly assigned to the "Captain of our salvation."

24. Cp. Isaiah liii. 3.

25. *of thee*] i.e., "Proceeding from Thee:" the source of praise is in God.

26. *meek*] Men of lowly spirit (cp. Matt. v. 5).

shall eat] The sacrificial meat partaken of by friends, and distributed to the poor, on occasions of thanksgiving. The sense is equally good and true in reference to the Antitype, Whose sacrificed Body, offered once for all on the Cross, is given as spiritual food to the faithful in the Eucharist.

your heart shall live for ever] That food preserves body and soul unto everlasting life.

27. Terms which found their full explanation in our Lord's last commission to His Apostles (see Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

29. *All they that be fat*] The general purport of this clause would seem to be that none shall truly prosper but those who recognize the God of David as their God by partaking of the gifts which are offered on His Altar. The spiritual application is obvious.

go down to the dust] i.e. to the grave. *none can keep &c.*] All alike depend upon God: the prosperous must worship if they are to be fed: all mortals must bow before Him, and none can live save by His gift.

30. *A seed*] Not merely the present race, but each succeeding generation of worshippers.

31. *that he hath done this*] i.e. completely

PSALM XXIII.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 THE LORD ^ais "my shepherd;—^bI shall not want.
 2 ^cHe maketh me to lie down in ¹green pastures:
^dHe leadeth me beside the ²still waters.
 3 He restoreth my soul:
^eHe leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of ^fthe shadow of death,
^gI will fear no evil: ^hfor thou art with me;
 Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
 5 ⁱThou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine
 enemies:
 Thou ^kanointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
 life:
 And I will dwell in the house of the LORD ⁴for ever.

^a Isai. 40. 11.
 Jer. 23. 4.
 1 Pet. 2. 25.
 Rev. 7. 17.
^b Phil. 4. 19.
^c Ezek. 34. 14.
^d Rev. 7. 17.
^e Ps. 5. 8.
 & 31. 3.
 Prov. 8. 20.
^f Job 10. 21.
 & 24. 17.
^g Ps. 44. 19.
^h Ps. 3. 6.
 & 27. 1.
 & 118. 6.
ⁱ Isai. 43. 2.
^j Ps. 104. 15.
^k Ps. 92. 10.

PSALM XXIV.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 THE ^aearth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof;
 The world, and they that dwell therein.

¹ Heb. *pastures of tender grass.*

² Heb. *waters of quietness.*
³ Heb. *makest fat.*

⁴ Heb. *to length of days.*

^a Ex. 9. 29.
 Deut. 10. 14.
 Job. 41. 11.
 Ps. 50. 12.
 1 Cor. 10.
 26. 29.

accomplished His purpose (see xxxvii. 5, where the A.V. has "He shall bring it to pass"). Our Saviour's last words "it is finished," supply a perfect commentary upon these words.

XXIII. The ascription which assigns this Psalm to David is confirmed by the contents, the imagery, and by the occurrence of phrases characteristic of the Davidic Psalms.

No Christian hymn meets the wants of Christians in trial more completely than this strain of David: *rv. 2, 3* describe the peace of a Christian resting in Christ; *v. 4*, the fearlessness of a Christian in the literal valley of death-shade; *v. 6*, the perpetual dwelling of the redeemed with God. The same divine Spirit dictated this ancient Psalm and the Gospel of Christ.

1. *my shepherd*] A common image in Scripture (cp. marg. ref. and Gen. xlviii. 15). Christ, in the New Testament, applies these tests to Himself (John x. 27, 28). The force of the similitude can only be understood if we consider the deep solitudes in which the Eastern shepherds fed their flocks, and the trials and dangers to which they were exposed (cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 34).

2. *still waters*] Cp. the marg. and the Prayer Book Version. The image exhibited is that of the "stillness of the flock," which, after restless motion, drinks peacefully at the long-sought stream.

3. *restoreth*] That is, "refreshes" and "quickens" by His Spirit, after intercourse with the world, as fresh pasture and sweet waters recruit the wandering sheep. See xix. 7, marg.

the paths of righteousness] i.e., "The

paths of security and peace" (see xvii. 5).

for his name's sake] i.e., "Not on account of any deserts of mine, but on account of His great name as a merciful and gracious God."

4. *Yea, though I walk &c.*] The image is partially changed; it is no longer that of sheep guarded by a shepherd; it is rather that of a wanderer in the midst of a valley, dark as the shadow of death.

The "staff" seems merely explanatory of the "rod;" the rod of the shepherd (Micah vii. 14) is a staff supporting the wanderer's steps. In Zech. xi. 7, the shepherd has two staves: one to lead the flock, and the other to defend it. So the protecting shepherd here may possibly be described. As an illustration of the image of this verse there is near Ispahan a valley, dreary, desolate, waterless, called "the valley of the angel of death."

5. A new image. Jehovah is David's princely entertainer and host. A table (Prov. ix. 2; Isai. xxi. 5) is spread for him in full security; his foes look on and are helpless. The words are illustrated by the circumstances mentioned in 2 Sam. xvii. 27-29.

6. The image in *v. 5* is continued (cp. xxvii. 4, xxxvi. 8). David is a guest (xv. 1) in the house of "his friend and protector," filled to abundance with His gifts "for ever."

The force of this Psalm is impaired in the Prayer Book Version by the substitution throughout of the future tense for the present.

XXIV. As the xxxiird Psalm expresses

^b Job. 38. 6.
Ps. 104. 5.
2 Pet. 3. 5.

^c Ps. 15. 1.

^d Isai. 33.
15. 16.
^e Job 17. 9.
1 Tim. 2. 8.
^f Matt. 5. 8.
^g Ps. 15. 4.

^h Ps. 27. 8.
& 105. 4.

ⁱ Isai. 26. 2.

^k Ps. 97. 6.
Hag. 2. 7.
Mal. 3. 1.
1 Cor. 2. 8.

2 ^bFor he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.

3 ^cWho shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 ^{d1}He that hath ^eclean hands, and ^fa pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
Nor ^gsworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him,
That ^hseek thy face, ²O Jacob. Selah.

7 ⁱLift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
^kAnd the King of glory shall come in.

¹ Heb. *The clean of hands.*

² Or, O God of Jacob.

the longing to dwell in God's House, so this describes the characteristics of those who are admitted into it. It consists of two parts, of which the second undoubtedly belongs to an occasion when the Ark, the symbol and pledge of God's Presence, was brought into the Sanctuary. The old Hebrew interpreters generally held that it was composed by David, when admonished by the Prophet Gad to choose a place for the building, with a view to its recitation when the work should be completed; but it seems far more probable that David wrote this and the xvth Ps. to be recited when the Ark was brought from the house of Obed-edom, and placed upon Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12). The adaptation to liturgical use is obvious; it was evidently intended to be recited in alternate parts, probably by the High-Priest and a choir of Levites. According to the inscription in the LXX., it was chanted in the Temple on the first day of the week: a remarkable fact, considering its typical application to the Resurrection or Ascension (*v.* 7 note) of our Lord.

The division of the Psalm is marked by Selah (*v.* 6).

1. The declaration of the universal sovereignty of the Lord has a manifest bearing upon the circumstances of this Psalm, since it shows at once the majesty of Him Who was about to be enthroned in Zion, and His condescension in taking up His abode among men.

2. *upon the seas*] In allusion to the rising of the dry land over the waters (Gen. i. 9). The Psalmist does not describe geological formations but natural phenomena, the earth raised above the seas, girt by the ocean, and resting apparently upon its waters. The contrast between its stability and the apparent insecurity of such a foundation served but to deepen the writer's apprehension of the Almightiness of the Creator.

3. *the hill of the LORD*] Where His Sanctuary is placed, whether Mount Zion, or,

after the building of the Temple, Mount Moriah; but in either case typical of His eternal abode in heaven.

4. David selects four points of character, two internal, two external: cleanness of hands combined with purity of heart; freedom from vain desires with observance of oaths. Of the two internal principles, "purity of heart" includes all godliness: not to "lift up the soul unto vanity" means not to fix the desires upon what is wrong, false, worthless, and inordinate; "vanity" including all that is comprehended under the scriptural term "lust," the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Of the external points, "cleanness of hands" means perfect honesty in dealings between man and man; both it and observance of oaths were matters of especial importance to the king, and directly connected with the sacredness of the House of God.

5. To "receive righteousness" is to have the gift of righteousness, grace to resemble God in His essential attributes, and conformity to the divine will and the divine Nature. It also includes the substantial fact of justification; for such a man has righteousness imputed to him. It is a phrase of great importance in its bearings upon the doctrinal teaching of the Psalms. The man who brings the conditions of acceptance, honesty of heart and uprightness in dealings, will receive grace for grace.

6. *This*] *i.e.* Such is the true character &c. See next note.

O Jacob] *i.e.* "This is the generation of them that seek Thee, this is the true Jacob, these the true inheritors of the blessings, Israelites not only in name but in spirit." The marginal rendering supposes either an ellipsis of the word "God," or a various reading supplying it.

7. This verse was evidently sung by the choir of Levites, bearing and accompanying the Ark as it was brought to the gates of the Sanctuary, or of the citadel of Zion. The

8 Who is this King of glory?—The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

PSALM XXV.

A Psalm of David.

1 (N) UNTO thee O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 (2) O my God, I trust in thee:

Let me not be ashamed,

Let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 (2) Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed:

Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 (7) Shew me thy ways, O LORD;

Teach me thy paths.

5 (7) Lead me in thy truth, and teach me:

For thou art the God of my salvation;

On thee do I wait all the day.

6 (7) Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving
kindnesses;

For they have been ever of old.

^a Ps. 86. 4.

& 143. 8.

Lam. 3. 41.

^b Ps. 31. 1.

& 34. 8.

Isai. 40. 23.

Rom. 10. 11.

^c Ps. 13. 4.

^d Ex. 33. 13.

Ps. 5. 8.

& 27. 11.

& 66. 11.

& 119.

& 143. 8, 10.

^e Ps. 103. 17.

& 106. 1.

& 107. 1.

Isai. 63. 15.

Jer. 33. 11.

¹ Heb. *thy bowels*.

"everlasting doors" suggest that the eternal gates of heaven, represented by the gates through which the Ark was passing, were in the mind of the Psalmist. The reference in this verse to the Ascension of our Lord is recognized by all the Fathers, and by our Church, which appoints this Psalm to be read at that great Festival.

8. The answer apparently implies that this entrance of the Lord into the Tabernacle took place after a conquest achieved by His interposition. "Strong" denotes an essential attribute of God, "mighty" its manifestation by acts: it is used of Christ, "the mighty God" (Isai. ix. 6).

10. *hosts*] Not merely the "armies" of warriors fulfilling His will, and dependent upon His favour for victory, but also Angels and the heavenly bodies, all the agencies of the visible and invisible universe. The epithet is constantly used in the Books of Kings, implying both the assurance of power and victory, and the subordination of all objects of idolatrous nature-worship to One omnipotent will.

XXV. This Psalm consists of prayers and pious ejaculations, not arranged in systematic order, and apparently not referring to any special events in the Psalmist's life. It may have been written by David at a period of distress and spiritual suffering during the latter part of his life (cp. v. 22 with 2 Sam. xxiv). The fact, however, that the Psalm is one of nine alphabetic Psalms,

each verse in the Hebrew beginning with a letter of the alphabet, has led some writers to assign to it a late date, perhaps that of the Babylonian exile. Some expressions are singularly unsuitable to this date (see vv. 2, 13); and the alphabetic arrangement was probably to help the memory; a point of practical importance whether this Psalm (like Ps. xxxiv) was intended for public recitation or for private devotion.

1. *Unto thee...do I lift up my soul*] Contrast this with the expression in Ps. xxiv. 4. The distinction between godly and ungodly men consists in the object to which their affections are directed.

2. *let not mine enemies &c.*] A feeling peculiarly strong in David (cp. 2 Sam. xxiv, 14). A writer in the time of the Babylonian exile would rather have prayed that the enemies should cease to triumph over him.

3. *transgress*] The Hebrew has the special sense of "treachery," when men break their covenant, whether in reference to their king, their friend (Job vi. 15), their Church (lxxiii. 15), or their God (Hosea v. 7, vi. 7). *without cause*] As though traitors and apostates sought for pretexts, but could find none (cp. lxx. 3, 4).

5. *in thy truth*] This denotes more than the mere knowledge of God's truth. His faithfulness and grace is, so to speak, the atmosphere in which the believer moves, the light which surrounds him and directs his steps.

- 7 (□) Remember not ⁷the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions:
 According to thy mercy remember thou me
 For thy goodness' sake, O LORD.
 8 (Ⓢ) Good and upright *is* the LORD:
 Therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
 9 (Ⓢ) The meek will he guide in judgment:
 And the meek will he teach his way.
 10 (Ⓢ) All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth,
 Unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
 11 (Ⓢ) ¹¹For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity;
 For it *is* great.
 12 (Ⓢ) What man *is* he that feareth the LORD?
 Him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.
 13 (Ⓢ) His soul ¹³shall dwell at ease;
 And ¹³his seed shall inherit the earth.
 14 (Ⓢ) ¹⁴The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him;
 And he will shew them his covenant.
 15 (Ⓢ) ¹⁵Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD;
 For he shall ¹⁵pluck my feet out of the net.
 16 (Ⓢ) ¹⁶Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me;
 For I *am* desolate and afflicted.
 17 (Ⓢ) The troubles of my heart *are* enlarged:
 O bring thou me out of my distresses.
 18 (Ⓢ) ¹⁸Look upon mine affliction and my pain;
 And forgive all my sins.
 19 (Ⓢ) Consider mine enemies; for they *are* many;
 And they hate me with ¹⁹cruel hatred.
 20 (Ⓢ) O keep my soul, and deliver me:
 Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.
 21 (Ⓢ) Let integrity and uprightness preserve me;
 For I wait on thee.
 22 (Ⓢ) ²²Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

¹ Heb. *shall lodge in goodness.*

² Or, *and his covenant to make them know it.*

³ Heb. *bring forth.*

⁴ Heb. *hatred of violence.*

7. *sins*] There is a deep consciousness of sin in this verse; two kinds of sin are indicated, sins of youthful passion and frailty, and sins of wilful transgression, such as belong to maturer age.

In this and in *vv.* 11, 18 the Psalmist uses the three words, sin, transgression, iniquity, which David employs repeatedly and in combination, when he is deploring his own great sin (*cp.* xxxii. 5, xxxviii. 3, 4, 18, li. 1, 2, 9).

8. *sinners*] Here not wilful men, but those who err from infirmity or natural sinfulness (*see* li. 5).

9. *meek*] The one condition on which sinners (*v.* 8) can build any hope is "poverty of spirit," *i.e.* the sense of weakness, helplessness, and contrition.

10. *testimonies*] *See* xix. 7 note.

11. *for thy name's sake*] *See* xxiii. 3 note. The greatness of the sin presses upon the heart in proportion to its sensitiveness and its knowledge of God's Name.

13. *shall dwell at ease*] Or, *abide in goodness*, *i.e.* in prosperity spiritual and temporal. "His soul" means the man in his

own person, as distinct from "his seed" or posterity. The word "abide," lit. "lodge," indicates that the abode here after all is but a sojourning; our earthly home but a caravanserai.

14. *The secret &c.*] *i.e.* Close personal intercourse, inner communion. The Lord not only counsels and instructs those who fear Him, but abides with them as their friend. *See* Job xxix. 4, and *cp.* Amos iii. 7.

and he will shew] Or, *and His covenant (is) to instruct them* (*see* *margin*) *i.e.* so as to reveal its deep inner meaning to them.

19. *cruel hatred*] Or, as in the *margin*, *i.e.* hatred proceeding altogether from malignity, without justification (*see* *v.* 3 note).

22. This last verse in the original does not follow the alphabetical order, and it may possibly be a pious ejaculation added during the Captivity. The original of xxxiv. 22 is another example of a similar irregularity. The prayer is one which at any age might have been offered by a pious Israelite, and, if by any, certainly by David, especially after the calamities of his later years.

PSALM XXVI.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 JUDGE ^ame, O LORD; for I have ^bwalked in mine integrity :
^cI have trusted also in the LORD ; therefore I shall not slide.
- 2 ^dExamine me, O LORD, and prove me ;
 Try my reins and my heart.
- 3 For thy lovingkindness *is* before mine eyes :
 And ^eI have walked in thy truth.
- 4 ^fI have not sat with vain persons,
 Neither will I go in with dissemblers.
- 5 I have ^ghated the congregation of evil doers ;
^hAnd will not sit with the wicked.
- 6 ⁱI will wash mine hands in innocence :
 So will I compass thine altar, O LORD :
- 7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving,
 And tell of all thy wondrous works.
- 8 LORD, ^kI have loved the habitation of thy house,
 And the place ^lwhere thine honour dwelleth.
- 9 ^mGather not my soul with sinners,
 Nor my life with ⁿbloody men :
- 10 In whose hands *is* mischief,
 And their right hand *is* ^ofull of ^pbribes.
- 11 But as for me, I will ^qwalk in mine integrity :
 Redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
- 12 ^rMy foot standeth in an ^seven place :
^tIn the congregations will I bless the LORD.
- ¹ Heb. of the tabernacle of thy honour. ² Or, Take not away.
- ³ Heb. men of blood. ⁴ Heb. filled with.

^a Ps. 7. 8.
^b 2 K. 20. 3.
 Prov. 20. 7.
^c Ps. 28. 7.
 Prov. 29. 25.
^d Ps. 7. 9.
 & 66. 10.
 & 139. 23.
 Zech. 13. 9.
^e 2 K. 20. 3.
^f Jer. 15. 17.
^g Ps. 31. 6.
 & 139. 21.
^h Ps. 1. 1.
ⁱ Ps. 73. 13.
 1 Tim. 2. 8.

^k Ps. 27. 4.

^l See 1 Sam. 25. 29.
 Ps. 28. 3.

^m Ex. 23. 8.
 Deut. 16. 19.
 1 Sam. 8. 3.
 Isai. 33. 15.

ⁿ ver. 1.
^o Ps. 40. 2.
^p Ps. 27. 11.
^q Ps. 22. 22.
 & 107. 32.
 & 111. 1.

XXVI. There are points of contact between this and Pss. xxiv., xxv: the phraseology is similar, and the train of thought would seem to be suggested by the conditions of acceptance set forth in the xxivth Psalm: but the absence of all reference to the consciousness of sin, which haunted David after his great fall, indicates an earlier date than that assigned to the xxvth Psalm. It may belong to the same date as the xvth and the xxivth, and have been written shortly after the Ark was brought from the house of Obed-edom. Others assign it to the period of Saul's persecution, or to the period of Absalom's revolt, or to a time of national visitation by pestilence.

1. *slide*] Or "slip" (xviii. 36). David desired to be judged for the past because he was conscious of integrity (cp. xxv. 21), and his confidence that for the future he shall be preserved from vacillation is grounded on his steadfast trust (xxv. 2) in the Lord.

2. "Examine" and "try," are used specially of the process of refining precious metals, a metaphor of frequent occurrence (see xii. 6, xvii. 3). "Prove" is the same as "tempt," in the sense of testing. David wishes his inmost thoughts and tendencies to be thoroughly scrutinized: the process may be painful, the refiner's fire must scorch, but he has no fear for the result.

3, 4. See i. 1 note. Vain persons are "men of vanity" (xxiv. 4).

6. *wash mine hands*] As the priests were commanded to do before they approached the Altar (Ex. xxx. 17-21); a common symbol of guiltlessness (Deut. xxi. 6; Matt. xxvii. 24.) *compass*] Implying near and habitual approach.

Both vv. 6, 7, may either refer to sacrifices offered by David's command, and to Psalms dictated by him to the choirs of Levites, or they may be understood in a spiritual sense.

8. "The place" where the glory of God is enshrined is the Mercy-seat, where the Lord manifested His Presence.

9. The two meanings "gather" and "take away" (marg.) are combined in the original word. David prays not to be numbered with the transgressors, or to share their fate. See Matt. xiii. 30.

10. *In whose hands is mischief*] The expression denotes the promptitude with which mischief or "crafty device" conceived in the heart is carried into effect.

full of bribes] This points at the magistracy, or high officers of state; the corruption of justice was then, and ever has been, the cancer of Oriental despotisms.

11. *redeem me*] Here specially, deliver me from the evils which will overwhelm the guilty.

12. *in an even place*] Or, on level ground: where one can advance without obstruction or danger of falling.

PSALM XXVII.

A Psalm of David.

- ^a Ps. 84. 11. 1 THE LORD is ^amy light and ^bmy salvation ;
 Isai. 60. 19. Whom shall I fear ?
 Mic. 7. 8. ^cThe LORD is the strength of my life ;
^b Ex. 15. 2. Of whom shall I be afraid ?
^c Ps. 62. 2. 2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes,
 & 118. 14. ¹Came upon me to ^deat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.
 Isai. 12. 2. 3 'Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not
^d Ps. 14. 4. fear :
^c Ps. 3. 6. Though war should rise against me, in this *will* I be confident.
- ^f Ps. 26. 8. 4 'One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after ;
^g Ps. 65. 4. That I may ^vdwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my
 Luke 2. 37. life,
^h Ps. 90. 17. To behold ^{2h}the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his
 temple.
- ⁱ Ps. 31. 20. 5 For 'in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion :
 & 83. 3. In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ;
 & 91. 1. He shall ^kset me up upon a rock.
 Isai. 4. 6. 6 And now shall 'mine head be lifted up above mine enemies
^k Ps. 40. 2. round about me :
ⁱ Ps. 3. 3. Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices ³of joy ;
 I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

¹ Heb. *approached against me.*² Or, *the delight.*³ Heb. *of shouting.*

in the congregations] David ever connects his feelings of thankfulness for deliverance and support with the duty of proclaiming God's goodness to his people.

XXVII. This Psalm expresses unshaken confidence in the midst of urgent dangers. The indications point naturally to the time when David was pursued by the army of Absalom, probably to the time when the last and decisive battle was about to be fought. The internal evidences of Davidic authorship are strong, as may be seen by examination of the marginal references to other Psalms (especially the *iiird*) admitted to be productions of David.

The rhythmical arrangement of this Psalm is striking and somewhat peculiar; the subdivision, or double-beat of the clauses, expresses with singular force the rapid alternations of thoughts and feelings.

1. *my light*] This is the first, and, in the Old Testament, the only passage in which the term "light" is *expressly* applied to the Lord. Cp. in the New Testament, 1 John i. 5; John i. 7-9; Rev. xxi. 23.

my salvation] Equivalent to "my Saviour" (Isai. lxii. 11). Cp. marg. ref.; a hymn ever in the mind of David.

strength of my life] Either, "stronghold of my life," in which my life is preserved; or, it may be, "my living stronghold."

2. *to eat up my flesh*] The expression, suggested, doubtless, by David's early experience, compares his enemies to beasts of prey.

3. The words of a leader or king; they were probably written in anticipation of

an immediate advance of Absalom's host (2 Sam. xvii. 26).

4-6. These two verses evidently imply that the Psalmist is in exile, but is confident that his desire will be granted, that he will speedily return to the Sanctuary, and abide there permanently.

4. *the beauty*] Or, "the graciousness." The word implies grace, beauty, loveliness. David speaks not of the outward beauty of the Sanctuary, but of the gracious attributes which its ritual symbolized. Of that "delight" absence could not deprive him, though, like a true Israelite, he longed for the outward ordinances, which enabled him more vividly to realize the invisible.

to enquire &c.] Or, "to contemplate in His palace" the Tabernacle consecrated by the visible symbols of God's Presence. See Ps. v. 7.

5. *pavilion*] Lit., "booth," constructed of branches of trees; but the word is used of the Tabernacle (lxxvi. 2). The expressions in this verse are figurative, and shew that David's mind dwelt wholly on the spiritual reality which the Tabernacle represented.

6. *sacrifices of joy*] Or, as in the margin, "shouting;" i.e. sacrifices offered with shouts of thankful exultation, or, "with the blare of trumpets" (lxxxix. 15 note); so vividly does the Psalmist realize the near triumph.

I will sing] The words in Eph. v. 19 are taken from the LXX. version of this passage.

- 7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice :
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
- 8 ¹ *When thou saidst,* ^m Seek ye my face ; my heart said unto thee,
Thy face, LORD, will I seek. ^m Ps. 24. 6.
& 105. 4.
- 9 ⁿ Hide not thy face *far* from me ;
Put not thy servant away in anger :
Thou hast been my help ; leave me not,
Neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. ⁿ Ps. 69. 17.
& 143. 7.
- 10 ^o When my father and my mother forsake me,
Then the LORD ² will take me up. ^o Isai. 40. 15.
- 11 ^p Teach me *thy* way, O LORD,
And lead me in ³ a plain path, because of ⁴ mine enemies. ^p Ps. 25. 4.
& 86. 11.
& 119. 33.
^q Ps. 35. 25.
- 12 ^q Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies :
For ^r false witnesses are risen up against me,
And such as ^s breathe out cruelty. ^r 1 Sam. 22. 9.
2 Sam. 16.
7. 8.
Ps. 35. 11.
^t Acts 9. 1.
- 13 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the
LORD
'In the land of the living.
- 14 ^u Wait on the LORD :
Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart :
Wait, I say, on the LORD. ^t Ps. 116. 9.
Jer. 11. 19.
Ezek. 26. 20.
^u Ps. 31. 24.
& 62. 1. 5.
& 130. 5.
Isai. 25. 9.
Hab. 2. 3.

PSALM XXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD
My rock ; ^a be not silent ^b to me :
^b Lest, ^c if thou be silent to me,
- ^a Ps. 83. 1.
^b Ps. 88. 4.
& 143. 7.
- ¹ Or, *My heart said unto thee, Let my face seek thy face, &c.* ² Heb. *will gather me*, Isai. 40. 11. ⁴ Heb. *those which observe me*, Ps. 5. 8. & 54. 5.
- ³ Heb. *a way of plainness*, Ps. 26. 12. ⁵ Heb. *from me*.

7-12. As in so many Psalms of David, there follows a rapid and complete change of tone. So long as the Psalmist fixes his thoughts wholly on God's grace and promise, he has no feeling but joy ; but when he reverts to his own state he is brought at once to earnest prayers.

8. The original runs thus : "To Thee said my heart, *in answer to Thy command*, 'Seek ye My face ;' Thy face, O Lord, will I seek." The Psalmist hears the voice of invitation, his heart accepts and answers it.

9. *far*] Omit this word ; it is not in the original, and disguises the close connexion between this and the preceding verse. Observe the reference to v. 1.

10. Not that David had actually been forsaken by his father and mother ; but he uses a proverbial form of expressing the thought that even were he forsaken by all who loved him most tenderly God would never give him up. The force of such an appeal depends upon the feeling that though a parent's love is the strongest bond that can bind man to man, it is yet incomparably weaker than that which binds him to God (see marg. ref.).

11. "Way" and "plain path" probably mean a way of safety and triumph, of deliverance and security.

VOL. III.

12. *false witnesses*] The exile of the king was brought about chiefly by the machinations and calumnies of Absalom's supporters.

13. *to see*] The Hebrew phrase, which is familiar, almost peculiar, to David, means to look with joy and triumph, generally upon the defeat of enemies (xxii. 17 note) ; but here, in accordance with his better and deeper feelings, upon the "goodness" of Jehovah (Ex. xxxiii. 19).

in the land of the living] Not simply "in this life," in contradistinction from the state after death ; but the land inhabited by a race living in the fear and in the grace of God.

14. *be of good courage*] Or, "be firm." Cp. Deut. xxxi. 7. David had the example of Joshua before him, and could therefore wait with certainty of victory.

XXVIII. The language, tone of thought, and feeling in this Psalm indicate circumstances similar to those of Ps. xxvii. The transition from prayer to blessing (v. 6) is sudden and complete ; it is the prayer of a king.

The Psalm has three strophes, of two, three, and four verses, thus increasing in length.

1. *silent to me*] Or, "from me," as in L.

- I become like them that go down into the pit.
- 2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee,
 "When I lift up my hands ^{1d}toward thy holy oracle.
- 3 "Draw me not away with the wicked,
 And with the workers of iniquity,
 Which speak peace to their neighbours,
 But mischief *is* in their hearts.
- 4 "Give them according to their deeds,
 And according to the wickedness of their endeavours:
 Give them after the work of their hands;
 Render to them their desert.
- 5 Because ^kthey regard not the works of the LORD,
 Nor the operation of his hands,
 He shall destroy them, and not build them up.
- 6 Blessed *be* the LORD,
 Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
- 7 The LORD *is* "my strength and my shield;
 My heart ^ktrusted in him, and I am helped:
 Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;
 And with my song will I praise him.
- 8 The LORD *is* ²their strength,
 And he *is* the ^{3l}saving strength of his anointed.
- 9 Save thy people,
 And bless ^mthine inheritance:
 "Feed them also, "and lift them up for ever.
- ^c 1 Kin. 6. 22, 23.
 & 8. 23, 29.
 Ps. 5. 7.
^d Ps. 138. 2.
^e Ps. 26. 9.
^f Ps. 12. 2.
 & 55. 21.
 & 62. 4.
 Jer. 9. 8.
^g 2 Tim. 4. 14.
 Rev. 18. 6.
^h Job 34. 27.
 Isai. 5. 12.
- ⁱ Ps. 18. 2.
^k Ps. 13. 5.
 & 22. 4.
- ^l Ps. 20. 6.
- ^m Deut. 9. 29.
 1 Kin. 8. 51,
 53.
ⁿ Ezra 1. 4.

PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

- ^a 1 Chr. 16. 28, 29.
 Ps. 96. 7, 8, 9.
- 1 "GIVE unto the LORD, O ⁵ye mighty,
 Give unto the LORD glory and strength.

¹ Or, *toward the oracle of thy sanctuary.*

² Or, *his strength.*

³ Heb. *strength of salvations.*

⁴ Or, *rule*, Ps. 78. 71.

⁵ Heb. *ye sons of the mighty.*

the margin, a construction involving two prayers, that God would not withhold an answer, nor turn away from His servant.

the pit] i.e. The grave, or Sheol, the abode of the departed. David does not realize it as a state of torment but of forgetfulness, the land where all things are forgotten, where sinners are lost without hope.

2. *lift up my hands*] Prayers were offered by the Hebrews, and still are by Orientals, with uplifted hands, outspread as if to receive God's gifts.

toward] The worshipper turned naturally towards the place where the Lord marked His Presence. From this and other verses it appears that the custom, afterwards universal, was already adopted, viz., that of turning towards the Holy City, and in intention towards the Sanctuary, even when absent from Jerusalem. By the "oracle" there is no doubt that David denotes the "Holy of Holies," whether the Hebrew word means "oracle" or "farthest," i.e. the western recess of the Tabernacle.

The outward act here described was symbolical of addressing prayers towards heaven

as the true abode shadowed forth by the earthly Sanctuary.

3. *Draw me not*] The figure is taken from a hunter drawing his prey by a cord or in a net (cp. x. 9).

5. The root of wickedness is thus declared to be an evil heart of unbelief. The denial of the providential dealings and judicial interventions of God is a characteristic mark of infidelity.

build them up] The words seem to apply specially to Absalom, whose object was to found a dynasty or a house.

8. *saving strength*] The words are singularly emphatic (see marg.), implying that all forms of salvation are derived to the nation through the anointed king, who thus stands out as the great type of the Saviour.

9. *feed them*] Or, *tend them*. God is represented as the shepherd of Israel. "Lift up" means bear them as a shepherd bears the lambs in his arms (see Isai. xl. 11, xlv. 3).

XXIX. David, as he kept his father's flock at Bethlehem (1 Sam. xvi. 11), may have witnessed such a storm of thunder, light-

- 2 Give unto the LORD ¹the glory due unto his name;
Worship the LORD ²in ^bthe beauty of holiness. ^b 2 Chr. 20. 21.
- 3 The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters :
^cThe God of glory thundereth :
The LORD *is* upon ^amany waters. ^c Job 37. 4, 5.
- 4 The voice of the LORD *is* ^dpowerful ;
The voice of the LORD *is* ^efull of majesty.
- 5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars ;
Yea, the LORD breaketh ^dthe cedars of Lebanon. ^d Isai. 2. 13.
- 6 ^eHe maketh them also to skip like a calf ;
Lebanon and ^fSirion like a young unicorn. ^e Ps. 114. 4. ^f Deut. 3. 9.
- 7 The voice of the LORD ^gdivideth the flames of fire.
- 8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness ;
The LORD shaketh the wilderness of ^hKadesh. ^g Num. 13. 26. ^h Job 39. 1, 2, 3.
- 9 The voice of the LORD maketh ⁱthe hinds ^jto calve,
And discovereth the forests :
And in his temple ^kdoth every one speak of *his* glory.
- 10 The LORD ⁱsitteth upon the flood ;
Yea, ^kthe LORD sitteth King for ever. ⁱ Gen. 6. 17. Job 38. 8, 25. ^k Ps. 10. 16. ^l Ps. 28. 8.
- 11 ^lThe LORD will give strength unto his people ;
The LORD will bless his people with peace.

PSALM XXX.

A Psalm and Song ¹at the dedication of the house of David.

- 1 I WILL extol thee, O LORD ; for thou hast ^alifted me up,
And hast not made my foes to ^brejoice over me.

¹ Heb. *the honour of his name.*

² Or, *in his glorious sanctuary.*

³ Or, *great waters.*

⁴ Heb. *in power.*

⁵ Heb. *in majesty.*

⁶ Heb. *cutteth out.*

⁷ Or, *to be in pain.*

⁸ Or, *every whit of it uttereth, &c.*

^{*} Deut. 20. 5.

² Sam. 5. 11.

& 6. 20.

^a Ps. 28. 9.

^b Ps. 25. 2.

& 35. 19, 24.

ning, and rain as is here painted; gathering round the summit of Hermon in the north, and shaking, at the last, the wilderness of Kadesh in the south.

The LXX. add to the title a phrase which seems to indicate that the Psalm was sung on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 42). In the modern synagogues it is appointed for the first day of Pentecost.

1. *One mighty*] Either Angels, as in lxxxix. 6 (see note); or "mighty men," the mighty ones of earth who are called upon to see the work of God and their own littleness in comparison with it.

The Version of the Prayer-Book, "Bring unto the Lord, O ye mighty, bring young rams unto the Lord," is from the Greek and Latin Versions which followed a different reading.

2. *in the beauty of holiness*] i.e. In vestments suited to holy service (see marg. ref. note).

4. The "voice of Jehovah" comes nigher and nigher! It is repeated twice, and we hear it twice, "in power," and "majesty" (as in the marg.), before it descends and shakes terribly the earth.

5, 6. The lightning falls and destroys the pride of Lebanon, the cedars which God

planted (civ. 16). The rolling thunder shakes the huge mountains—we almost see them shaking—to their foundations. Lebanon skips like a calf: Sirion (or Hermon, Deut. iii. 9) like a **young bull** (see Job xxxix. 9 note).

Thunder and lightning and the roar of the tempest are all expressed in "the voice" of God.

7. The lightning is now seen, the thunder, as it were, "dividing" the flashes of flame.

9. The hinds, through terror and affright, bring forth their young before the time: the forests are stripped of bark and branches: and everywhere in God's Temple of heaven and earth a voice is raised, singing "Glory to Him that reigneth."

10. *The LORD sitteth upon the flood*] A vast deluge of rain accompanies the tempest; but Jehovah rules it; and is always a King, sitting on His throne for ever.

11. Jehovah, Who rules the storm, and is mighty and terrible to strike, also protects His people, and is mighty to save.

XXX. The occasion of this Psalm is given in the inscription. The internal evidences of Davidic authorship are strong, both as regards style and tone of thought. It is a model hymn of thanksgiving, composed in the best age of Hebrew poetry, for

- 2 O LORD my God,
 I cried unto thee, and thou hast ^chealed me.
 3 O LORD, ^dthou hast brought up my soul from the grave :
 Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not ^ego down to the pit.
 4 ^fSing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his,
 And give thanks ¹at the remembrance of his holiness.
 5 For ²his anger *endureth but* a moment ; ^hin his favour *is* life :
 Weeping may endure ³for a night, ⁱbut ^jjoy *cometh* in the morning.
 6 And ^kin my prosperity I said,—I shall never be ^mmoved.
 7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast ⁿmade my mountain to stand strong :
 8 Thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.
 9 I cried to thee, O LORD ;
 And unto the LORD I made supplication.
 10 What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit ?
 11 ^oShall the dust praise thee ? shall it declare thy truth ?
 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me :
 LORD, be thou my helper.
 12 ^pThou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing :
 Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness ;
 13 Or, *to the memorial*.
 14 Heb. there is but a moment in his anger.
 15 Heb. in the evening.
 16 Heb. singing.
 17 Heb. settled strength for my mountain.

recitation in the Temple. The dedication alluded to is usually taken to be the dedication of the site of the Temple in Mount Moriah (1 Chr. xxii. 1) ; but some hold that David wrote the Psalm to celebrate the erection of a fortified palace on Mount Zion.

1. *hast lifted me up*] The expression implies deliverance from a depth of misery.

my foes] Though suitable to other occasions, this has a special fitness in reference to 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

2. *thou hast healed me*] The word may apply, as in vi. 2, to mental affliction, the prostration of sympathy with suffering, caused by the Psalmist's sin. The reference, however, to bodily sickness may be borne out by other passages which speak of fearful maladies, apparently at the time immediately preceding Absalom's revolt.

3. *that I should not go down to the pit*] Or, "from those who go down to the pit" (cp. marg. ref.) ; i.e. while others are perishing, God has preserved the Psalmist's life.

4. David calls on his people, those especially who have experienced God's favour and grace, the "saints," to join in psalmody ; the Hebrew word applies specially to public celebrations.

at the remembrance] Or, as in the marg., i.e. "to His holy name" (cp. Ex. iii. 15).

5. Lit. *For a moment (passeth) in His anger, life in His favour*, i.e. God's anger against the man of prayer is momentary : His grace is life-long.

6. *in my prosperity*] The word includes outward peace and success, such as led to

David's special fault in numbering the people, and to an inward feeling of self-complacency and careless ease (cp. Prov. i. 32). He recognizes the immediate cause of his affliction. He had been guilty of presumption (see xix. 13 ; cp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 3, 17) ; and had used the very words which he takes as specially characteristic of the wicked (cp. x. 6.).

7. Or, O Lord, in Thy favour Thou hadst established strength for my mountain. This is taken either figuratively or more naturally of Mount Zion, which David had fortified, and the strength of which he now attributes to the favour of God (2 Sam. v. 7-9).

troubled] The Hebrew word denotes the extremity of dismay (cp. vi. 2, 3 ; 1 Sam. xxviii. 21).

9. *my blood*] The expression is equivalent to death by a sudden blow, or to sickness inflicted by God's anger (cp. Job xvi. 18).

go down to the pit] This refers to v. 3 ; where, however, a different word is used for "pit" ; here the meaning, though disputed, is connected with "corruption."

Shall the dust praise thee ?] "Dust" here means the body in its state of dissolution.

11. *into dancing*] This must apply to a public celebration, praise and thanksgiving, such as took place at the Exodus (Ex. xv. 20), at the installation of the Ark (2 Sam. vi. 14, 16), and on all great occasions of thanksgiving.

sackcloth] See 1 K. xx. 31. On no occa-

12 To the end that ¹my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

PSALM XXXI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 IN ^athee, O LORD, do I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed:
^bDeliver me in thy righteousness.
- 2 ^cBow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily:
Be thou ²my strong rock,
For an house of defence to save me.
- 3 ^dFor thou art my rock and my fortress;
Therefore ^efor thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.
- 4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me:
For thou art my strength.
- 5 ^fInto thine hand I commit my spirit:
Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.
- 6 I have hated them ^gthat regard lying vanities:
But I trust in the LORD.
- 7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy:
For thou hast considered my trouble;
Thou hast ^hknown my soul in adversities;
- 8 And hast not ⁱshut me up into the hand of the enemy:
^kThou hast set my feet in a large room.
- 9 Have ^lmercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble:
^mMine eye is consumed with grief, ⁿyea, my soul and my belly.
- 10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing:
My strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and ^omy bones are consumed.
- 11 ^pI was a reproach among all mine enemies,

^a Ps. 22. 5.
& 71. 1.
Isai. 40. 23.
^b Ps. 143. 1.
^c Ps. 71. 2.

^d Ps. 18. 2.
^e Ps. 23. 3.
& 25. 11.

^f Luke 23.
46.
Acts 7. 59.
^g Jonah 2. 8.

^h John 10.
27.
ⁱ Deut. 32.
30.
1 Sam. 17. 46.
& 24. 18.
^k Ps. 4. 1.
& 18. 19.
^l Ps. 6. 7.
^m Ps. 32. 3.
& 102. 3.

ⁿ Ps. 41. 8.
Isai. 53. 4.

¹ That is, my tongue, or, my soul: See Gen. 49. 6.

Ps. 57. 8.

² Heb. to me for a rock of strength.

sion could it be worn more fitly than during the pestilence caused by the king's sin.

12. *glory*] See xvi. 9 note.

XXXI. This Psalm abounds in reminiscences of others which are undoubtedly Davidic, and it is attributed by many to the time of David's persecution by Saul; but many reasons concur in assigning it to a later period of his life, to the circumstances of his flight from Absalom. Some attribute the Psalm to Jeremiah, on account of some obvious coincidences of style. These, however, are sufficiently accounted for by that Prophet's well-known habit of using older compositions, especially the Psalter; and there are expressions in the Psalm which are wholly inapplicable to Jeremiah (e.g. vv. 10, 21).

1. *ashamed*] i.e. "Put to shame by the prostration of my hopes, and by the success of my enemies" (see xxv. 2).

2. *strong rock*] See xviii. 2 note.
house of defence] Lit., "a house of fortresses;" i.e. strongly fortified on every side.

4. *the net*] This may apply with equal force to the danger of capture by Saul, or to the devices of Ahithophel.

my strength] Or, **Stronghold** (cp. v. 2).

5. *Into thine hand*] The adoption of these words by our Blessed Lord (see marg. ref.) gives a peculiar interest to the Psalm, which is throughout typical; and has, therefore, a true prophetic character.

6. *lying vanities*] An epithet properly applicable to idols; but including all forms of idle superstition, witchcraft, divinations, and teraphim, of which there are many notices in the age of David.

7. *known &c.*] Or, "Thou hast known (me) in the troubles of my soul."

8. *in a large room*] i.e. Space, where the foot may move freely.

9. *my soul and my belly*] See Job xxxii. 19 note.

10. *mine iniquity*] The confession proves a consciousness of sin, committed and punished, such as is only found in Psalms written after the king's great crime.

my bones are consumed] Racked by pains; exhausted by the prostration produced by mental or bodily anguish, or by both.

11. The first "among" is lit. "from," a word which points to his enemies, such as Ahithophel, as the origin of the reproach.

- ° Job 19. 13. But especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance:
 Ps. 38. 11. ° They that did see me without fled from me.
 & 88. 8, 18. ° I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind:
 ° Ps. 64. 8. I am like ¹a broken vessel.
 ° Ps. 88. 4, 5. ° For I have heard the slander of many:
 ° Jer. 20. 10. ° Fear was on every side: while they took counsel together
 ° Jer. 6. 25. against me,
 & 20. 3. They devised to take away my life.
 Lam. 2. 22. ° But I trusted in thee, O LORD:—I said, Thou art my God.
 ° Matt. 27. 1. ° My times are in thy hand:
 Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
 ° Num. 6. 25, 26. ° Make thy face to shine upon thy servant:
 Ps. 4. 6. Save me for thy mercies' sake.
 & 67. 1. ° Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee:
 ° Ps. 25. 2. Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.
 ° 1 Sam. 2. 9. ° Let the lying lips be put to silence;
 Ps. 115. 17. Which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously
 ° Ps. 12. 3. against the righteous.
 ° 1 Sam. 2. 3. ° Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them
 Ps. 94. 4. that fear thee;
 Jude 15. Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the
 ° Isai. 64. 4. sons of men!
 1 Cor. 2. 9. ° Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the
 ° Ps. 27. 5. pride of man:
 & 32. 7. ° Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of
 ° Job 5. 21. tongues.
 21 Blessed be the LORD:
 ° Ps. 17. 7. For he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong
 ° 1 Sam. 23. 7. city.
 ° 1 Sam. 23. 22 For I said in my haste,
 26. ° Heb. a vessel that per- ° Or, let them be cut off for
 Ps. 116. 11. isheth. the grave. ° Heb. a hard thing.
 ° Or, fenced city.

The second "among" is lit. "to." The reproach originated with his enemies, but was extended to, and taken up by, his neighbours (cp. Matt. xxvi. 56; Mark xiv. 50). In this passage the typical character of the Psalm is strongly marked.

12. A potter's vessel represents fragility and worthlessness (cp. ii. 9; Isai. xxx. 14; Jer. xix. 11).

13. *slander*] The word denotes calumny creeping and spreading about secretly.

fear was on every side] This expression becomes almost proverbial in Jeremiah (see marg. ref.): here it describes the consternation of the king and his friends when the revolt of Absalom broke out.

15. *My times*] All seasons of life with their vicissitudes of weal and woe (cp. 1 Chr. xxix. 30).

18. *grievous things*] Proud, haughty things. The pride of David's enemies is a prominent thought, especially in the Psalms which speak of Absalom and his abettors (cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 1-3).

19. Goodness is described not only as "laid up," or, **stored up**, but also as "wrought" in effect and manifestation before the eyes of men. David thus appeals to faith and experience.

20. *secret of thy presence*] Or, "of Thy face." The light of God's countenance shining on the just not only protects them, but hides them, as did the pillar of fire in the wilderness.

pride] The original word occurs only in this passage. Its meaning is not certain, but probably denotes **conspiracies**. While David prays in God's Presence, the conspirators are baffled (cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 14-22).

a pavilion] See Ps. xxvii. 5 note.

21. *in a strong city*] Or, as in the margin; Lit. "city of stronghold." The expression is perhaps figurative, but was suggested by actual occurrences, such as David's position beyond the Jordan (2 Sam. xviii).

22. *cut off from before thine eyes*] That was the most poignant feeling of the exile from the city where the Ark was placed.

^aI am cut off from before thine eyes :
Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications
When I cried unto thee.

^a Isai. 38.
11, 12.
Lam. 3. 54.
Jonah 2. 4.
^a Ps. 34. 9.

- 23 ^cO love the LORD, all ye his saints :
For the LORD preserveth the faithful,
And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer,
24 ^bBe of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart,
All ye that hope in the LORD.

^b Ps. 27. 14.

PSALM XXXII.

¹ A Psalm of David, Maschil.

- 1 BLESSED *is he whose* ^atransgression *is forgiven, whose sin is* covered. ^a Ps. 85. 2.
2 Blessed *is the man unto whom the LORD* ^bimputeth not iniquity, Rom. 4. 8,
And *in whose spirit there is no guile.* 7. 8.
3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old ^b2 Cor. 5. 19.
Through my roaring all the day long. ^c John 1. 47.
4 For day and night thy ^dhand was heavy upon me :
My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. ^d 1 Sam. 5.
5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not 6, 11.
hid. Job 33. 7.
^eI said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD ; Ps. 38. 2.
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. ^e Prov. 28.
13.
Isai. 65. 24.
Luke 15.
18, 21, &c.
1 John 1. 9.

¹ Or, A Psalm of David giving instruction.

In his ^abanishment, David learned thoroughly to realize the fact of God's omnipresence.

24. *all ye that hope in the LORD* See Job xiii. 15 note. Hope and trust are the special characteristics of the servant of God ; the Psalm begins with trust, and ends with hope.

XXXII. This Psalm dwells altogether on inward and spiritual afflictions. There can be little doubt that it was composed by David very soon after his repentance (2 Sam. xii), when he had time to meditate upon the past and to realize the blessing of forgiveness.

Written somewhat later than the xxist, it has been adopted by the Church as one of the great penitential Psalms. It is used by the Jews at the close of the service on the Day of Atonement.

The structure is rhythmical, showing the care which David bestowed upon the composition of a Psalm intended to be a model and guide for penitents. There are six strophes, each with two verses ; three end with Selah.

Maschil A didactic song, intended for instruction (see v. 8). Thirteen Psalms bear this designation.

1. David in this passage, and in others where he confesses and deplores his guilt (v. 5, li. 1-5), uses three words, which represent it (1) as an offence against God, "transgression ;" (2) as an internal depravity or perversity, "iniquity ;" and (3) as a defilement, "sin." For each of these a special remedy is supplied. The *transgression* is a heavy load, which is lifted up

and taken away ("forgiven") : the *sin*, or defilement, "is covered," a legal term, which is often equivalent to atonement ; and the *iniquity*, inherent in a sinner, and not wholly eradicated while life continues, is not imputed, *i.e.* is not taken into account, it is as though the iniquity were not there at all. David is throughout speaking of the grace which effectually bestows and applies both pardon and atonement. Hence St. Paul's appropriation of the thought (see marg. ref.).

2. *iniquity*] This is the evil habit, the state of antagonism to God, which, if imputed, would ensure utter destruction.

no guile] The one condition is that there be no dishonesty, no attempt to disguise, gloss over, extenuate, or justify the sin. The total absence of such a spirit proves that sin, great and deadly as it may be, is a stranger ; that though admitted it is not welcomed ; that when it is once clearly seen it is hated.

3. *my bones*] See xxxi. 10 note. From this verse we learn that the long interval between the seduction of Bathsheba and the mission of Nathan was passed in bitter struggles of conscience, not without severe prostration of bodily powers.

my roaring] See xxii. 1 note. The cry of bitter anguish does not prove that the conscience is awakened ; until that speaks out the roaring is in vain.

5. Conscience once awakened seeks no delay ; confession comes at once, and is at once followed by forgiveness. This accords exactly with 2 Sam. xii. 13. In this *verse*

- ^s 1 Tim. 1. 16.
^s Isai. 55. 6.
 John 7. 34.
- ^a Ps. 9. 9.
 & 27. 5.
- ⁱ Ex. 15. 1.
 Judg. 5. 1.
 2 Sam. 22. 1.
- ^k Prov. 26. 3.
 Jam. 3. 3.
ⁱ Job 35. 11.
- ^m Prov. 13. 21.
 Rom. 2. 9.
ⁿ Ps. 34. 8.
 & 84. 12.
 Prov. 16. 20.
 Jer. 17. 17.
^o Ps. 64. 10.
 & 68. 3.
- ^a Ps. 32. 11.
 & 97. 12.
^b Ps. 147. 1.
- ^c Ps. 92. 3.
 & 144. 9.
^d Ps. 96. 1.
 & 144. 9.
 Isai. 42. 10.
 Rev. 5. 9.
- 6 ^fFor this shall every one that is godly ^gpray unto thee ^hin a time when thou mayest be found:
 Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.
- 7 ^aThou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble;
 Thou shalt compass me about with ⁱsongs of deliverance. Selah.
- 8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:
^jI will guide thee with mine eye.
- 9 ^kBe ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have ^lno understanding:
 Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle,
 Lest they come near unto thee.
- 10 ^mMany sorrows shall be to the wicked:
 But ⁿhe that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.
- 11 ^oBe glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous:
 And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.
- PSALM XXXIII.
- 1 REJOICE ^ain the LORD, O ye righteous:
 For ^bpraise is comely for the upright.
- 2 Praise the LORD with harp:
 Sing unto him with the psaltery ^cand an instrument of ten strings.
- 3 ^dSing unto him a new song;—play skilfully with a loud noise.
- ¹ Heb. in a time of finding. ² Heb. I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee.

David again uses those three words of v. 1 which together exhaust all aspects of sin, save that of rebellious and impenitent wickedness from which he is free.

6. *godly*] One who is loved by God and responds to His love.

in a time &c.] Lit. as in the marg., i.e. in a time of acceptance, when God is found in answer to prayer, and therefore gracious.

floods of great waters] i.e. Overwhelming calamities (see xviii. 4).

they shall not come nigh unto him] i.e. "The waters shall not reach him." Our Prayer-book Version suggests a different thought.

7. *songs of deliverance*] Such as those in marg. ref. For the expression "compass," cp. v. 12 note.

8. These words are in accordance with the pledge given (li. 12, 13). The last clause means "I will watch thee closely while counselling thee" (cp. margin).

9. *lest they come &c.*] Rather, "They will not come near to thee." The object of bit and bridle is not to keep the beast from the rider, but to make it obedient, to compel it to go where it is wanted. Man ought to need no such coercion to come near to God. The passage is translated by some, "whose adornment is with bit and bridle for curbing, or it will not come nigh thee," i.e. which is adorned, but with trappings intended to subdue it, because of its stubbornness and unwillingness to come near its master.

10. *Many sorrows*] Inflicted either in mercy to compel them to come to God or in punishment for invincible obstinacy. The word applies specially to inflictions, as in Ex. iii. 7.

XXXIII. This Psalm is not attributed to David, nor are there any certain internal marks to designate either the author, the date, or the occasion of its composition (see v. 17 note). It is a Psalm of praise and thanksgiving, singularly bright, replete with beautiful imagery, and well adapted for the liturgical services of the Temple.

The structure of the Psalm is regular; it begins and ends with utterances of praise, each consisting of three verses, the intermediate portion containing eight strophes, each of two verses: this arrangement appears to be intended for antiphonal recitation.

2. The harp (Gk. *κithára*) and the psaltery represent two classes of stringed instruments, distinguished by the arrangement of the strings; the latter was played with two hands.

with the psaltery and &c.] Render, "with a ten-stringed psaltery." One instrument only is intended.

3. *a new song*] i.e. A song fresh from the Psalmist's heart. The expression occurs frequently, and in special connexion with thanksgiving for deliverance.

loud noise] i.e. of trumpets, cymbals, and loud jubilant shouts (lxxxvii. 7).

- 4 For the word of the LORD *is* right;
And all his works *are done* in truth.
- 5 ¹He loveth righteousness and judgment:
²The earth is full of the ³goodness of the LORD.
- 6 ⁴By the word of the LORD were the heavens made;
And ⁵all the host of them ⁶by the breath of his mouth.
- 7 ⁷He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap:
He layeth up the depth in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD:
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
- 9 For ⁸he spake, and it was *done*;
He commanded, and it stood fast.
- 10 ⁹The LORD ¹⁰bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought:
He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.
- 11 ¹¹The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever,
The thoughts of his heart ¹²to all generations.
- 12 ¹³Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD;
And the people *whom* he hath ¹⁴chosen for his own inheritance.
- 13 ¹⁵The LORD looketh from heaven;
He beholdeth all the sons of men.
- 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh
Upon all the inhabitants of the earth.
- 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike;
¹⁶He considereth all their works.
- 16 ¹⁷There ¹⁸is no king saved by the multitude of an host:
A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
- 17 ¹⁹An horse *is* a vain thing for safety:

¹ Ps. 11. 7.
& 45. 7.
² Ps. 119. 64.

³ Heb. 11. 3.
⁴ 2 Pet. 3. 6.
⁵ Gen. 2. 1.
⁶ Job 26. 13.
⁷ Gen. 1. 9.
Job 26. 10.

⁸ Gen. 1. 3.
Ps. 146. 6.

⁹ Isai. 8. 10.
& 19. 3.

¹⁰ Job 23. 13.
Isai. 40. 10.

¹¹ Ps. 65. 4.
& 144. 15.
¹² Ex. 19. 6.
Deut. 7. 6.
¹³ 2 Chr. 16. 9.
Job 28. 24.
Ps. 11. 4.
Prov. 15. 3.

¹⁴ Job 34. 21.
Jer. 32. 19.
¹⁵ Ps. 44. 6.

¹⁶ Ps. 20.
& 147. 10.
Prov. 21. 31.

¹ Or, *mercy*.

² Heb. *maketh frustrate*.

³ Heb. *to generation and generation*.

4. *the word of the LORD*] i.e. The expression or manifestation of God's will, including all utterances whether in revelation or nature. See v. 6.

5. *righteousness and judgment*] The former denotes the essential principle, the second the manifestation in act, of God's justice.

6. The "Word of the Lord" is the command which called the universe into existence; the "Breath" is the quickening Spirit which brooded on the abyss, and gave life and form to all things. The Psalmist detaches the two great truths involved, or intimated, in Gen. i. 1, 2, and expresses them in terms which find their full explanation in the doctrine of the Trinity. The New Testament doctrine of the Word incarnate in Christ is here in germ.

the host] The word combines the two ideas of multitude and order, and is therefore nearly equivalent to the Greek *Cosmos*.

7. *as an heap*] This expression describes the convex surface of the ocean, and with a reference to Ex. xv. 8, Josh. iii. 13-16.

storehouses] The depths are represented as depositories of waters which at God's bidding may overflow the earth, whether for purposes of mercy or of judgment (see Job xxxviii. 22 &c.): the practical inference is drawn out in v. 8.

9. *stood fast*] This refers to the permanence of all the works of God in creation. See cxix. 90, 91.

10, 11. On the one hand God frustrates all "devices" (or, *purposes*) which are not in accordance with His will; on the other (v. 11), He gives eternal effect to His own "thoughts" (or, *purposes*). The world's history is but a development of the principles which have their abode and origin in God.

14. *looketh upon*] The Hebrew word is very rare (Isai. xiv. 16, cp. Song. Sol. ii. 9), it evidently denotes close inspection; here that of Providence.

15. *alike*] Or, *altogether*; every heart is fashioned, i.e. moulded by Him; derives from Him *all* its faculties and endowments. Others prefer the sense, "He at once mouldeth their hearts and understandeth all their wants. He knows the heart because He formed it."

16, 17. These two verses imply that the king has a powerful army, many strong warriors, and a force of cavalry. Hence the Psalm was probably not written in David's time, when horses were little, if at all, used in warfare. The whole tone of the Psalm seems to fit the reign of Asa or Jehoshaphat.

Neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.

- * Job 36. 7. 18 "Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* ^aupon them that fear him,
 Ps. 34. 15. Upon them that hope in his mercy;
 1 Pet. 3. 12. 19 To deliver their soul from death,
 * Ps. 147. 11. And ^bto keep them alive in famine.
 * Job 5. 20.
 Ps. 37. 19. 20 "Our soul waiteth for the LORD:—"he *is* our help and our
 * Ps. 62. 1, 5. shield.
 & 130. 6. 21 For our ^bheart shall rejoice in him,
 * Ps. 115. 9, 10, 11. Because we have trusted in his holy name.
 * Ps. 13. 5. 22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
 Zech. 10. 7. According as we hope in thee.
 John 16. 22.

PSALM XXXIV.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

- ^a Eph. 5. 20. 1 (S) I WILL ^abless the LORD at all times :
 1 Thess. 5. 18. His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
 2 Thess. 1. 3. 2 (2) My soul shall make her ^bboast in the LORD :
 & 2. 13. "The humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.
 * Jer. 9. 24. 3 (2) O ^dmagnify the LORD with me,
 1 Cor. 1. 31. And let us exalt his name together.
 * Ps. 119. 74. & 142. 7. 4 (7) I ^esought the LORD, and he heard me,
 & Ps. 69. 30. And delivered me from all my fears.
 Luke 1. 46. 5 (7) ^eThey looked unto him, and were lightened :
 * Matt. 7. 7. And their faces were not ashamed.
 Luke 11. 9. 6 (7) ^fThis poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*,
 & ^gsaved him out of all his troubles.
 7 (7) ^hThe angel of the LORD ⁱencampeth round about them that
 fear him,
 And delivereth them.
 8 (8) O ^ktaste and see that the LORD *is* good :
 "Blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.
 9 (9) ^mO fear the LORD, ye his saints :
 For *there is* no want to them that fear him.
 10 (2) ⁿThe young lions do lack, and suffer hunger :
 "But they that seek the LORD shall not want *any good thing*.
 11 (5) Come, ye children, hearken unto me :
 "I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
 12 (2) What man *is he that* desireth life,
 And loveth *many* days, that he may see good ?
 13 (1) Keep thy tongue from evil,
 And thy lips from ^rspeaking guile.

¹ Or, *Achish*, 1 Sam. 21. 13.

² Or, *They flowed* unto him.

19. *in famine*] An infliction which would be prominently before the mind of a contemporary of Ahab : see v. 16 note.

XXXIV. This and Ps. xxv. are closely connected. Both are alphabetical Psalms, with rather singular deviations and additions in common. It is attributed to David; and the great distress and anxiety of the Psalmist, combined with freedom from all consciousness of deep guilt and fearful transgression, harmonize with the occasion mentioned in the inscription.

Abimelech] Or, *Achish*, see marg. It is probable that the king bore two names, the one personal, the other dynastic.

5. *looked...were lightened*] This is preferable to the marginal translation. All who look to the Lord steadfastly, see and reflect the light of His countenance (cp. 2 Cor. iii. 18).

6. *This poor man*] Not merely the Psalmist, but any humble believer.

7. The mention of one Angel, who is encamping around about His servants, directs our thoughts to the Angel of the Covenant, the captain of the host of Jehovah (Josh. v. 14; Gen. xxxii. 1. 2).

10. *young lions*] Types of the cruel and the violent (xxxv. 17. See marg ref.)

13. *tongue*] See James iii. 2-10. The

- 14 (D) ^aDepart from evil, and do good;
^tSeek peace, and pursue it.
- 15 (Y) ^uThe eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous,
 And his ears are open unto their ^zcry.
- 16 (D) ^vThe face of the LORD is against them that do evil,
^sTo cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 17 (S) ^tThe righteous cry, and ^athe LORD heareth,
 And delivereth them out of all their troubles.
- 18 (7) ^bThe LORD is high ^cunto them that are of a broken heart;
 And saveth such as be ²of a contrite spirit.
- 19 (7) ^aMany are the afflictions of the righteous:
^eBut the LORD delivereth him out of them all.
- 20 (W) He keepeth all his bones:—^rnot one of them is broken.
- 21 (7) ^vEvil shall slay the wicked:
 And they that hate the righteous ³shall be desolate.
- 22 (C) The LORD ^bredeemeth the soul of his servants:
 And none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

PSALM XXXV.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 PLEAD ^amy cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me:
^bFight against them that fight against me.
- 2 ^cTake hold of shield and buckler,
 And stand up for mine help.
- 3 Draw out also the spear, and stop ^dthe way against them that persecute me:
 Say ^eunto my soul, I am thy salvation.

¹ Heb. *to the broken of heart.*² Heb. *contrite of spirit.*³ Or, *shall be guilty.*

special mention here may refer to the occasion pointed out in the inscription.

14. *pursue it*] The word implies great exertion and eagerness in the pursuit. Cp. Is. li. 1.

16. *the remembrance*] The dread that together with a man's prosperity his name and memory should utterly perish is specially characteristic of the Semitic races.

18. The two words "broken" and "contrite," applied severally to the heart and spirit, denote more than sorrow for sin; all that is hard and stubborn in the feelings and mind, all that resists the entrance of grace or its free working, must be broken and crushed in the Presence of the Saviour.

20. *not one of them is broken*] The passage in St. John's Gospel (marg. ref.) which speaks of our Saviour's exemption from this indignity of Crucifixion may possibly refer to this Psalm, as well as to Exod. xii. 46. The Psalmist also may have had in mind the typical meaning of that part of the ritual; for the lamb represented innocence and acceptance with God.

21. *Evil shall slay*] Evil is, so to speak, personified; it not only occasions but directly causes death. Cp. vii. 15, 16.

shall be desolate] Rather, "shall be punished," or "condemned."

22. *and none &c.*] Or, *and none shall be condemned of them that trust in Him.*

^a Ps. 37. 27.
 Isai. 1. 18.
^t Rom. 12. 18.
 Heb. 12. 14.
^u Job 36. 7.
 Ps. 33. 18.
^v 1 Pet. 3. 12.
^z ver. 6. 17.
^s Jer. 44. 11.
 Amos 9. 4.
^a Prov. 10. 7.
^b ver. 6. 15.
 Ps. 145. 19.
^c Ps. 145. 18.
^e Ps. 51. 17.
 Isai. 57. 15.
 & 61. 1.
^d 2 Tim. 3.
 11, 12.
^e ver. 6. 17.
^f John 19.
 36.
^v Ps. 94. 23.
^h 2 Sam. 4. 9.
 Ps. 71. 23.
 Lam. 3. 58.

^a Ps. 43. 1.
 & 119. 154.
 Lam. 3. 58.
^b Ex. 14. 25.
^c Isai. 42. 13.

XXXV. This Psalm probably belongs to the earlier life of David; the position is that of a subject, harassed, poor, beset by enemies, liable to judicial persecution; there is no special consciousness of guilt, but perfect confidence in God's righteousness, and in his own: the language also is rugged, with many archaic forms and obscure idioms, the rhythm highly lyrical and full of movement. All these characteristics point to the time when David was pursued by Saul (cp. v. 1 and 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, 15). There is an apparent connexion between this and the preceding Psalm, though they differ exceedingly in tone: they are the only Psalms which expressly name the Angel of the Lord.

The metrical structure is peculiar and highly artistic: three divisions, each ending with ejaculations of thanksgiving; see vv. 9, 18, 27, 28.

1. *Plead my cause*] The expression belongs properly to judicial proceedings; but inasmuch as the cause is carried on not in a court of justice but in the battle-field, the advocate must be also a champion, and the images at once pass over into the sphere of warfare.

3. *and stop (the way)*] This translation follows the old Versions, and it is defended by many commentators; but some render the clause "draw out also the spear and the battle-axe against &c."

^d ver. 26.
Ps. 40. 14.
& 70. 2, 3.
^e Ps. 129. 5.

^f Job 21. 18.

Ps. 1. 4.
& 83. 13.
Isai. 29. 5.
Hos. 13. 3.
^g Ps. 73. 18.
Jer. 23. 12.
^h Ps. 9. 15.

ⁱ 1 Thess. 5. 3.

^k Ps. 7. 15.
& 57. 6.
& 141. 9.
Prov. 5. 22.
^l Ps. 13. 5.

^m See
Ps. 51. 8.
ⁿ Ex. 15. 11.
Ps. 71. 10.
^o Ps. 27. 12.

^p Ps. 38. 20.
& 109. 3, 4.
Jer. 18. 20.
John 10. 32.
^q Job 30. 25.
Ps. 69. 10.
^r Matt. 10. 13.
Luke 10. 6.

- 4 ^d Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul:
Let them be ^e turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.
- 5 ^f Let them be as chaff before the wind:
And let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.
- 6 Let their way be ^g dark and slippery:
And let the angel of the LORD persecute them.
- 7 For without cause have they ^h hid for me their net in a pit,
Which without cause they have digged for my soul.
- 8 Let ⁱ destruction come upon him ² at unawares;
And ^k let his net that he hath hid catch himself:
Into that very destruction let him fall.
- 9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD:
^l It shall rejoice in his salvation.
- 10 ^m All my bones shall say,—LORD, “who *is* like unto thee,
Which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him,
Yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?”
- 11 ³⁰ False witnesses did rise up;
⁴ They laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.
- 12 ⁿ They rewarded me evil for good—to the ⁵ spoiling of my soul.
- 13 But as for me, ^q when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth:
I ⁶ humbled my soul with fasting;
^r And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
- 14 I ⁷ behaved myself ⁸ as though *he had been* my friend or brother:
I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for his* mother.

¹ Heb. darkness and slipperiness.
² Heb. which he knoweth not of.

³ Heb. Witnesses of wrong.
⁴ Heb. they asked me.
⁵ Heb. depriving.
⁶ Or, afflicted.

⁷ Heb. walked.
⁸ Heb. as a friend, as a brother to me.

4. *seek after my soul*] A frequent expression in Davidic Psalms.

5, 6. The Psalmist represents his foes' discomfiture under two figures; the first taken from common experience, but with the introduction of a striking image, which raises it into the higher sphere of poetry. As they are scattered in a confused rout, like the light chaff in the windy winnowing field, the Angel of the Lord, the defender of the pious (xxxiv. 7), *strikes* (not “chases”) each in turn with his strong arm, and throws him down. They seek safety in flight, but the roads are dark and slippery; they stumble, are overtaken, and fall under the blows of the mighty Being Whose wrath they have provoked.

7. Some arrange this verse “Without cause they have hid for me a net, without cause they have digged a pit for my soul.”

10. *All my bones*] See xxxi. 10 note.

The epithet “poor” joined with “needy” is thought to point here to David's early life.

11. *False witnesses*] Or, “malignant witnesses.”

they laid to my charge] The marginal translation is accurate, but the text expresses the meaning; asking, or demanding,

in a court of justice is a legal term, and involves a charge.

12. *to the spoiling*] Lit. “bereavement to my soul,” i.e. I am left alone, like an orphan, without a helper, friend, or advocate. Such was David's position in his flight, separated from his wife, his friend Jonathan, and his parents. Cp. John xiv. 18.

13. *when they were sick*] The words have a peculiar force and propriety if referred to David's feeling for Saul, labouring under the most terrible of all maladies (cp. 1 Sam. xvi. 14, xviii. 10).

my prayer returned] The prayer goes forth from the bosom, but its effect depends on the inner state of those on whose behalf it is offered: if they are fit objects of God's favour it brings a blessing upon them; if not, it is lost so far as regards them; but inasmuch as it cannot be ineffectual it comes back to the offerer, bringing to him an assurance of spiritual union with God. Cp. marg. refl.

14. *I bowed down heavily*] With downcast head and drooping gait, as one who mourns his nearest and dearest; such were ever the outward demonstrations of woe in the East. The climax should be noted, friend, brother, mother.

- 15 But in mine ¹adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together:
 Yea, ²the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not;
 They did ³tear me, and ceased not:
- 16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, ⁴they gnashed upon me with their teeth.
- 17 Lord, how long wilt thou ⁵look on?
 Rescue my soul from their destructions,
⁶My darling from the lions.
- 18 ⁷I will give thee thanks in the great congregation:
 I will praise thee among ⁸much people.
- 19 ⁹Let not them that are mine enemies ¹⁰wrongfully rejoice over me:
 Neither ¹¹let them wink with the eye ¹²that hate me without a cause.
- 20 For they speak not peace:
 But they devise deceitful matters against *them that are quiet* in the land.
- 21 Yea, they ¹³opened their mouth wide against me,
 And said, ¹⁴“Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.”
- 22 *This* thou hast ¹⁵seen, O LORD: ¹⁶keep not silence:
 O Lord, be not ¹⁷far from me.
- 23 ¹⁸Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment,
 Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.
- 24 ¹⁹Judge me, O LORD my God, ²⁰according to thy righteousness;
 And ²¹let them not rejoice over me.
- 25 ²²Let them not say in their hearts, ²³“Ah, so would we have it:
 Let them not say, ²⁴“We have swallowed him up.”
- 26 ²⁵Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt:
 Let them be ²⁶clothed with shame and dishonour that ²⁷magnify themselves against me.
- 27 ²⁸Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour ²⁹my righteous cause:
 Yea, let them ³⁰say continually, Let the LORD be magnified,
³¹“Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.”

¹ Heb. *halting*, Ps. 38. 17.² Heb. *my only one*.³ Heb. *strong*.⁴ Heb. *falsely*, Ps. 38. 19.⁵ Heb. *Ah, ah, our soul*.⁶ Heb. *my righteousness*,

Prov. 8. 18.

15. *adversity*] Or, in my fall (cp. David's position when Saul became his enemy; 1 Sam. xviii. 29).

the abjects] Or, “slanderrers.” The original word is thought to denote “smitters,” i.e. with the tongue.

and I knew it not] Or, “whom I knew not;” persons beneath my notice (cp. ci. 4).

16. *hypocritical mockers*] Lit. “profane jesters (or railers) of cakes,” i.e. men who make profane jests for the sake of a cake. It describes a class of parasites currying favour by profane or licentious jests, and rewarded by a share of their patron's dainties. David had frequently been the object of such gibes at the table of Saul, after his loss of favour.

17. *my darling*] See marg. ref. note.

18. *much people*] The marg. “strong” is

accurate; but a strong people means “numerous,” and is equivalent to “great” in the preceding clause; thus Gen. xviii. 18.

19. *wrongfully*] Therejoicing is not feigned, but it is without just cause (cp. xxxviii. 19).

wink with the eye] A gesture of mockery and mutual concert between the Psalmist's enemies (cp. Prov. vi. 13, x. 10).

21. *opened their mouth*] Probably with scornful laughter.

25. *so would we have it*] This is the meaning of the original “ah, ah, our soul” (see marg.), i.e. our desire, just what we desired. Cp. xxvii. 12.

27. *which hath pleasure*] Who hath delight in; a word specially characteristic of David.

prosperity] Lit. “peace,” including safety and prosperity.

- * Ps. 50. 15. 28 * And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness
 & 51. 14. And of thy praise all the day long.
 & 71. 24.

PSALM XXXVI.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David the servant of the Lord.

- 1 THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,
That there is no fear of God before his eyes.
 2 For ^bhe flattereth himself in his own eyes,
¹Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
 3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and *'deceit* :
^dHe hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.
 4 ^eHe deviseth ²mischief upon his bed ;
 He setteth himself ^fin a way *that is* not good ;
 He abhorreth not evil.
 5 ^gThy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens ;
 And thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.
 6 Thy righteousness *is* like ³the great mountains ;
^hThy judgments *are* a great deep :
 O LORD, ⁱthou preservest man and beast.
 7 ^kHow ⁴excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God !
 Therefore the children of men ^jput their trust under the shadow
 of thy wings.
 8 ^mThey shall be ⁵abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy
 house ;

¹ Heb. *to find his iniquity to hate.*

² Or, *vanity.*

³ Heb. *the mountains of God.*

⁴ Heb. *precious.*

⁵ Heb. *watered.*

On the general question how the bitter imprecations, which especially characterize the Psalms written during the period of David's flight from the court of Saul, can be explained, see p. 95.

XXXVI. A Psalm which vividly portrays the contrast between evil and good.

The contemplative character of the Psalm, the absence of personal allusions, and the quiet confidence in the triumph of the righteous, point to a later period in David's life than that to which the preceding Psalms have been referred ; it may have been composed at Jerusalem, either before the king's great fall, or more probably towards the close of his reign.

1. *within my heart*] If the text be retained, its meaning may be : The Psalmist hears within his own heart the echo of the suggestions which sin whispers to the wicked ; this explains to him how it is that a man can sin so fearlessly : he who listens to it loses altogether the sense of God's Presence and the fear of His judgments. Others change the present text, and read (with the Versions) "within his heart : " *i.e.* the voice of transgression (speaks) to the wicked within his heart ; *i.e.* in the heart of the wicked there is a voice of crime. Crime is personified as dwelling in the heart of the wicked, and as uttering suggestions, to which he listens as to an oracle.

2. Or, "For it (*i.e.* crime speaking in the man's heart) makes all smooth to him in his own eyes, so as *not* to find his sin, to

hate it." The man under the influence of that spirit of evil loses all sense of guilt and danger, cannot find his sin, much less feel its hatefulness.

4. *mischief*] *Iniquity.* Cp. Micah ii. 1, which corresponds exactly with this, and is probably taken from it.

he abhorreth not] Sin, accepted as an oracle, gradually destroys all sense of the evil of sin : the last stage is utter apathy.

5. Here is the voice of the true oracle : all the attributes of the Lord stand out at once before the eyes of God's servant, never more distinctly than when the workings of evil give intensity to his feelings.

6. *great mountains*] Lit. as in marg., mountains on which God has stamped the impress of His own majesty and grandeur. Such epithets as these show how deeply the Hebrew felt the beauty and majesty of natural scenery : the mountains were ⁹ him an outward representation of the righteousness deep-rooted in the very essence of the God-head, and towering over the earth in its manifestation.

a great deep] Unfathomable by human or created understanding. Cp. Rom. xi. 33.

thou preservest] One of the most touching characteristics of Hebrew poetry is the instantaneous transition from the contemplation of God's majesty and unapproachable essence to that of His providential care. Cp. Ps. civ. ; Jonah iv. 11.

8. *fatness of thy house*] Words which have a reference to the offerings in the Sanctuary ;

- And thou shalt make them drink of ^athe river ^oof thy pleasures.
 9 ^pFor with thee *is* the fountain of life:
^qIn thy light shall we see light.
 10 O' continue thy lovingkindness ^runto them that know thee;
 And thy righteousness to the ^supright in heart.
 11 Let not the foot of pride come against me,
 And let not the hand of the wicked remove me.
 12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen:
 They are cast down, ^tand shall not be able to rise.

^a Job 20. 17.
 Rev. 22. 1.
^o Ps. 16. 11.
^p Jer. 2. 13.
 John 4. 10,
 14.
^q 1 Pet. 2. 9.
^r Jer. 22. 16.
^s Ps. 7. 10.
 & 94. 15.
 & 97. 11.
^t Ps. 1. 5.

PSALM XXXVII.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 (S) FRET ^anot thyself because of evil doers,
 Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
 2 For they shall soon be cut down ^blike the grass,
 And wither as the green herb.
 3 (Σ) Trust in the LORD, and do good;
 So shalt thou dwell in the land, and ^cverily thou shalt be fed.
 4 ^dDelight thyself also in the LORD;
 And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

^a ver. 7.
 Ps. 73. 3.
 Prov. 23. 17.
 & 24. 1.
^b Ps. 90. 5, 6.

^c Isai. 58. 14.

¹ Heb. draw out at length.

² Heb. in truth, or, stability.

and remind the Christian of that great Offering, the food and sustenance of the soul, which those offerings prefigured. Cp. Jer. xxxi. 12-14. On the word "house" see v. 7 note.

pleasures] Or, "delights." The Hebrew word suggests a paradisaical state of bliss; "Thy Eden" watered by the river of life.

9. *fountain of life*] The source of life, natural and spiritual, promised in the Old Testament, and given by Christ (cp. marg. reff.).

in thy light] St. John (i. 4) found here the central truth of his doctrinal system. The true light can only be discerned by those who live in it. The believing soul lives in an element of light, which at once quickens and satisfies the spiritual faculty, whereby heaven and heavenly things are realized.

11. *pride*] This marks David's hand. His Psalms which speak of danger point to the "pride" of his enemies, secret or open, as the source.

remove me] i.e. Drive me out of the land (cp. 2 K. xx. 8). The prayer indicates the consciousness of danger from disaffected subjects. There may be a reference to Joab and his party.

12. *Therē*] The word is emphatic. The Psalmist sees the very place of overthrow.

XXXVII. This is one of the alphabetic Psalms, and, like all others of that class, it is wholly didactic. It is the work of a teacher of great experience and high authority, having no object but the edification of the people. It is attributed in the inscription to David; nor is it improbable that, towards the end of his life (see v. 25), he may have composed this among other Psalms for

the use of his subjects: the language and whole tone of the composition are certainly unlike other Davidic Psalms, but the difference may be to some extent accounted for by the subject-matter, and by the object of the writer.

The true object of the whole Psalm is to warn the hearer against the temptation to repine at the success of the ungodly. It proceeds throughout on the principle of certain and complete retribution. The point of view is altogether that of the Law. It is the authoritative teaching of the Old Dispensation touching the questions raised in the Book of Job, with which the writer was evidently familiar. Still it leaves the real problem of life but very partially solved, and suggests difficulties which could only be removed by Him Who brought life and immortality to life.

1. *Fret*] The expression in the original is very forcible: "Do not work thyself into heat; look coolly upon the facts; the heat will otherwise take the form of envy, the most perilous of all temptations" (cp. Prov. xxiv. 19; Job xxi. 6 &c.).

2. *cut down*] Cp. Job xiv. 2, xxvii. 13-23.

3. *so shalt thou dwell*] Or, *dwell in the land*; this is at once an exhortation and promise. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 28.

verily thou shalt be fed] Lit. "feed truth," i.e. either (1) feed in stability, or security; or (2) "practise truth," cultivate faithfulness.

4. *Delight thyself*] The word in the original expresses the feeling of blessedness and rapture. The true counterpoise to envy of the temporal prosperity of the wicked is the inward intensity of joy in communion with God.

- ^d Prov. 16. 3. 5 (2) ^{1d} Commit thy way unto the LORD;
^{Matt.} 6. 25. Trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.
^{Luke} 12. 22. 6 ^e And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,
^{1 Pet.} 5. 7. And thy judgment as the noonday.
^c Job 11. 17.
^{Mic.} 7. 9.
^f Ps. 62. 1. 7 (7) ² Rest in the LORD, ⁹ and wait patiently for him:
^g Isai. 30. 15. ^h Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,
^{Lam.} 3. 26. Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
^h ver. 1. 8.
^{Jer.} 12. 1.
ⁱ Ps. 73. 3. 8 (7) Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:
^{Eph.} 4. 26. ⁱ Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
^k Job 27. 13,
^{14.}
ⁱ ver. 11. 22.
^{Isai.} 57. 13.
^m Heb. 10. 9 ^k For evildoers shall be cut off:
^{36. 37.} But those that wait upon the LORD, they shall ^l inherit the
ⁿ Job 7. 10. earth.
^{20. 9.}
^o Matt. 5. 5. 10 (7) For ^m yet a little while, and the wicked *shall* not *be*:
Yea, ⁿ thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not
be.
11 ^o But the meek shall inherit the earth;
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
12 (7) The wicked ³ plotteth against the just,
^p And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.
13 ^q The LORD shall laugh at him:
For he seeth that ^r his day is coming.
14 (7) The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their
bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
And to slay ^s such as be of upright conversation.
^p Mic. 5. 6. 15 ^s Their sword shall enter into their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.
^t Prov. 15. 16. 16 (2) ^t A little that a righteous man hath
^{& 16. 8.} Is better than the riches of many wicked.
^{1 Tim.} 6. 6. 17 For ^u the arms of the wicked shall be broken.
^u Job 34. 15. But the LORD upholdeth the righteous.
^{Ps.} 10. 15.
^{Ezek.} 30.
^{21. &c.} 18 (7) The LORD ^v knoweth the days of the upright:
^w Ps. 1. 6. And their inheritance shall be ^v for ever.
^v Isai. 60. 21. 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time:
And ^w in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
^z Job 5. 20.
^{Ps.} 33. 19. 20 (2) But the wicked shall perish,
And the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as ⁵ the fat of lambs:
They shall consume;—^a into smoke shall they consume away.
^a Ps. 102. 3.

¹ Heb. *Roll thy way upon the LORD.*

² Heb. *Be silent to the LORD.*

³ Or, *practiseth.*

⁴ Heb. *the upright of way.*

⁵ Heb. *the preciousness of lambs.*

5. *Commit*] Lit. as in the margin; i.e. "Cast thyself altogether without hesitation." See xxii. 8 note.

bring it to pass] Lit. "will do," completely accomplish His purpose.

7. *Rest*] Or, as in the margin; i.e. with the silence of perfect resignation and acquiescence.

8. *in any wise* &c.] Lit. "only to do evil." Fret not thyself, since that can only lead thee to do evil and dishonest acts against God and man, which will class thee with the evildoers.

9. *For evildoers* &c.] Envy leads to evil-doing, and evil-doing to destruction.

10. *and it shall not be*] Or, "but he is not;" not the least trace of him shall remain (cp. Job viii. 18, 22).

11. This connexion between meekness, a humble, patient, and gentle character, and earthly prosperity, is justified by our Lord's adoption of the saying (see marg. ref.).

13. *his day*] See Job xviii. 20; Jer. l. 27, 31; Obad. 12. The day in which a man is shown as he is, and receives his own deserts, is in the fullest sense "his day."

20. *fat of lambs*] A forcible figure, since the fat of lambs was wholly consumed upon the Altar in the daily sacrifice. Many pre-

- 21 (b) The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again :
But ^bthe righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.
- 22 ^cFor such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth ;
And *they that be cursed of him* ^dshall be cut off.
- 23 (c) ^eThe steps of a good man are ¹ordered by the LORD :
And he delighteth in his way.
- 24 ^fThough he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down :
For the LORD upholdeth *him with his hand*.
- 25 (f) I have been young, and *now* am old ;
Yet have I ^{not} seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed ^gbeg-
ging bread.
- 26 ^hHe is ²ever merciful, and lendeth ;—and his seed *is* blessed.
- 27 (D) ⁱDepart from evil, and do good ;—and dwell for evermore.
- 28 For the LORD ^kloveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints ;
They are preserved for ever :
^lBut the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
- 29 ^mThe righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell therein for ever.
- 30 (D) ⁿThe mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,
And his tongue talketh of judgment.
- 31 ^oThe law of his God *is* in his heart ;
None of his ³steps shall slide.
- 32 (S) The wicked ^pwatcheth the righteous,
And seeketh to slay him.
- 33 The LORD ^qwill not leave him in his hand,
Nor ^rcondemn him when he is judged.
- 34 (7) ^sWait on the LORD, and keep his way,
And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land :
^tWhen the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.
- 35 (7) ^uI have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like ⁴a green bay tree.

^b Ps. 112. 5.^c Prov. 3. 33.^d ver. 9.^e 1 Sam. 2. 9.

Prov. 16. 9.

^f Ps. 34. 19,

20.

& 40. 2.

^g Mic. 7. 8.^h Job 15. 23.

Ps. 59. 15.

& 109. 10.

ⁱ Deut. 15. 8,

10.

Ps. 112. 5.

^k Ps. 34. 14.

Isai. 1. 16.

^l Ps. 11. 7.^m Ps. 21. 10.

Prov. 2. 22.

Isai. 14. 20.

ⁿ Prov. 2.

21.

^o Matt. 12.

35.

^p Deut. 6. 6.

Ps. 40. 8.

& 119. 98.

Isai. 51. 7.

^q Ps. 10. 8.^r 2 Pet. 2. 9.^s Ps. 109. 31.^t ver. 9.

Ps. 27. 14.

Prov. 20. 22.

^u Ps. 52. 5, 6.

& 91. 8.

^v Job 5. 3.¹ Or, *established*.² Heb. *all the day*.³ Or, *goings*.⁴ Or, *a green tree that groweth in his own soil*.

fer to render the original words, "the preciousness of fields," i.e. the flowers of the field, the destruction of which is an image of frequent occurrence (v. 2; Matt. vi. 30; Jam. i. 11).

21. This verse expresses a deep and true moral aspect both of poverty and prosperity; the one, as a punishment for sin, involves an incapacity of discharging obligations; the other, as a reward of virtue, enables a man to confer benefits upon his fellows without expecting any return (cp. Deut. xv. 6, xxviii. 12).

22. *For*] This verse shows how it is that the wicked and the righteous are in the position described in v. 21.

23. *ordered*] Rather, as in the margin. God secures the just man from falling.

he delighteth] i.e. God approves his way.

24. *fall*] i.e. into misfortune rather than into a sin of error or infirmity.

utterly cast down] Or, "be prostrated." There may be a partial fall or stumble, but

not utter prostration (see Prov. xxiv. 16; 2 Cor. iv. 9).

25. The assertion in this verse implies that though the righteous may suffer, yet he cannot be utterly forsaken; and this is true even though the rectification of apparent or real inequalities is reserved to a future state.

26. This implies that the good man is never reduced to such straits as to be unable to help others (2 Cor. iv. 8-12, viii. 2).

33. This promise refers to two ways in which the wicked persecute the just; viz. by force, and by wrong judgment.

35. *like a green bay tree*] The marg. brings out the true meaning of the Hebrew. Possibly the oleander, a native shrub, with bright flowers but no fruit, abundance of leaves but poisonous, growing wild, useless to man, and untended, may have been here in the Psalmist's mind. Cp. Matt. xv. 13; Job xviii. 16-18.

- * Job 20. 5. 36 Yet he ^apassed away, and, lo, he *was* not :
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
- 37 (w) Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright :
For ^vthe end of *that man is* peace.
- ^v Isai. 32. 17.
& 57. 2.
^a Ps. 1. 4.
& 52. 5. 38 ^aBut the transgressors shall be destroyed together :
The end of the wicked shall be cut off.
- ^a Ps. 3. 8. 39 (Γ) But ^athe salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD :
^b He *is* their strength ^bin the time of trouble.
- ^c Isai. 31. 5. 40 And ^athe LORD shall help them, and deliver them :
He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save ^cthem,
^d Because they trust in him.
- ^d 1 Chr. 5. 20.
Dan. 3. 17.
& 6. 23.

PSALM XXXVIII.

A Psalm of David, * to bring to remembrance.

- * Ps. 70,
title.
^a Ps. 6. 1. 1 O ^aLORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath :
Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
- ^b Job 6. 4. 2 For ^bthine arrows stick fast in me,
And ^cthy hand presseth me sore.
- ^c Ps. 32. 4. 3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger ;
^d Neither *is there any* ¹rest in my bones because of my sin.
- ^d Ps. 6. 2.

¹ Heb. *peace, or health.*

36. Cp. marg. ref. The coincidences between the whole of the Psalm and the Book of Job are remarkable, the more so since the point of view is very different : the latter is the production of an anxious and perplexed inquirer ; this of one who has learned, and has the mission to teach, the truth.

37. *the end of that man is peace*] This suggests the promise of an hereafter. To the righteous the ultimate result of his acts is eternal peace ; to the unrighteous (v. 38) "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (cp. 2 Thess. i. 9 ; Ps. xcii. 7).

XXXVIII. Among the penitential Psalms none bear deeper marks of a season of utter prostration of heart and spirit, of a combination of trials, mental and bodily. It was composed some time after the complete awakening of David's conscience to the deadly guilt contracted by Uriah's death, when the results of that act were manifested in the fearful disorders of his family ; in the triumph of malicious and slanderous enemies ; in agonies of mind, accompanied and exaggerated by a terrible malady, attributed by the Psalmist himself to his own sin. Yet withal there is a sense of inward communion. David knows that the hand which presses on him is for chastisement, and that the Lord hears his groaning ; his confession and contrition are combined with hope ; he desires to be nearer God, and sums up all with calling upon the Lord as his salvation.

All these things point to the period just preceding the revolt of Absalom. There are indications that at that time David was prostrate by disease, which gave full scope to the machinations of his son and his abet-

tors ; and from which David recovered only to witness their success.

There is a close resemblance between this, as, indeed, all other penitential Psalms, and the Book of Job, sufficient to prove that one of the two writers was familiar with the other (see pp. 8, 100) ; though the similarity of position might partly account for the coincidences.

The Psalm is frequently referred to in the New Testament. Its application to the Saviour, of Whom David was a type in so many points, in none more so than in suffering, is natural ; but though prophetic in the sense that the words of David are true of feelings which reached their highest intensity in the Son of man, the Psalm is not predictive, it speaks of the present and actual, not of the future and ideal ; it belongs rather to a man not only of sorrow but of sin committed ; hence it is adopted by conscience-smitten sinners, while they feel that Christ's acceptance of the burden, and participation of the agonies, assures them of the help which David sought, and gives them a certainty of deliverance.

The Psalm has three principal divisions. *to bring to remembrance*] The term here, and in marg. ref., has a close connexion with the offering of incense, the symbol of earnest and acceptable prayer. Cp. Rev. viii. 4.

2. Or, "Thine arrows have fallen on me, and Thy hand falleth heavily upon me." In the original the same word is used in both clauses.

3. *rest*] Or, as in ^cthe margin, "peace : " the bones are racked with incessant pains. *my sin*] The immediate cause of suf-

- 4 For ¹mine iniquities are gone over mine head :
As an heavy burden they are too ²heavy for me.
5 My wounds stink and are corrupt—because of my foolishness.
6 I am ³troubled ; ⁴I am bowed down greatly ;
⁵I go mourning all the day long.
7 For my loins are filled with a ⁶loathsome disease :
And *there is* ⁷no soundness in my flesh.
8 I am feeble and sore broken :
⁸I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.
9 Lord, all my ⁹desire is before thee ;
And my groaning is not hid from thee.
10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me :
As for ¹⁰the light of mine eyes, it also ¹¹is gone from me.
11 ¹²My lovers and my friends ¹³stand aloof from my ¹⁴sore ;
And ¹⁵my kinsmen ¹⁶stand afar off.
12 ¹⁷And that seek after my life ¹⁸lay snares for me :
And they that seek my hurt ¹⁹speak mischievous things,
And ²⁰imagine deceits all the day long.
13 But ²¹I, as a deaf man, heard not ;
²²And I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.
14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not.
And in whose mouth are no reproofs.
15 For ²³in thee, O LORD, ²⁴do I hope :
Thou wilt ²⁵hear, O Lord my God.

¹ Heb. *wried*.² Heb. *is not with me*.³ Heb. *stroke*.⁴ Or, *my neighbours*.⁵ Or, *thec do I wait for*.⁶ Or, *answer*.⁷ Ezra 9. 6.

Ps. 40. 12.

⁸ Matt. 11.

28.

⁹ Ps. 35. 14.¹⁰ Job 30. 28.

Ps. 42. 9.

¹¹ Job 7. 6.¹² ver. 3.¹³ Job 3. 24.

Isai. 59. 11.

¹⁴ Ps. 6. 7.

& 88. 9.

¹⁵ Ps. 31. 11.¹⁶ Luke 10.

31. 32.

¹⁷ Luke 23. 49.¹⁸ 2 Sam. 17.

1, 2, 3.

¹⁹ 2 Sam. 16.

7, 8.

²⁰ Ps. 35. 20.²¹ See 2 Sam.

16. 10.

²² Ps. 39. 2.²³ 2 Sam. 16.

12.

Ps. 39. 7.

fering is the infliction, the ultimate cause is the sin which incurred wrath. Some have thought that this Psalm was written by Jeremiah ; but Jeremiah never attributes his great sufferings to his personal guilt.

4. *gone over mine head*] *i.e.* Overwhelming him like a flood (ccxix. 4, 5).

5. The sin works inwardly like poison ; it produces swellings which burst. There is little doubt that David was at the time smitten with a disease common in all ages in the East. Cp. Isai. xxxviii. 21.

6. *troubled*] Or, as in the margin, "*wried*," *i.e.* bent, twisted by violent spasms. The words "*bowed down*" and "*go*" describe the prostration and the slow uncertain movements of a heavily afflicted mourner.

7. *loins*] Or, "*kidneys*." The disease is described by a word which means burning ; a violent inflammatory action on the kidneys. The Psalmist realized in such symptoms a type of the spiritual disease which consumed the soul.

8. *feeble*] The original speaks of deadly chill, corpse-like cold, such as alternates with fever-fits. The words, "*roar*" and "*disquietness*" (or, *moaning*) belong properly to wild beasts ; the roaring is an echo of the heart's moaning (cp. xxii. 1).

9. *groaning*] Or, *sighing*. The words of this verse are the first indication of hope in this Psalm ; they lead up to v. 15.

10. *panteth*] *i.e.* "*palpitates violently*," as in severe attacks of fever.

the light of mine eyes] The failure of sight is noted by Job (xvii. 7) as one of the last and most distressing results of his terrible disease. See also marg. ref.

11. *sore*] Better as in the margin ; the word means specially a blow inflicted in wrath. It is the word used in Isai. liii. 4, 8.

kinsmen &c.] Rather, "*my near ones stood afar off* ;" near either in place, friendship, or relationship.

12. David's prostration of strength, and inability for a season to discharge his kingly duties, probably suggested devices to Absalom and his abettors (2 Sam. xv. 1-6), and gave them an opportunity of carrying them on without let or hindrance.

mischievous things] Or, *malice* (see v. 9 note). David's enemies represented the disease not only as a chastisement, but as a proof that God had abandoned him to destruction for his great crime.

13. The Psalmist probably refers to David's silence while the conspiracy was proceeding. The typical reference to our Lord is obvious (cp. Isai. liii. 7).

14. *reproofs*] *pleadings*, to rebut a charge. David represents himself as one who will not attempt to defend himself, but who relies on the justice and wisdom of the judge. Silence does not therefore prove the consciousness of guilt, but the contrary.

15. *hear*] Or, as in the marg., in the sense, "*Thou wilt make answer for me, take my*"

- * Ps. 13. 4. 16 For I said, *Hear me*, ^vlest otherwise they should rejoice over me:
 * Deut. 32. 35. When my ^afoot slippeth, they ^amagnify themselves against me.
 * Ps. 35. 26. 17 For I *am* ready ¹to halt,
 And my sorrow *is* continually before me.
 * Ps. 32. 5. 18 For I will ^bdeclare mine iniquity;—I will be ^csorry for my sin.
 * 2 Cor. 7. 9, 10. 19 But mine enemies ²are lively, and they are strong:
 * Ps. 35. 19. And they that ^dhate me wrongfully are multiplied.
 * Ps. 35. 12. 20 They also ^ethat render evil for good are mine adversaries;
 / See 1 Pet. 3. 13. / Because I follow *the thing that good is*.
 * Ps. 35. 22. 21 Forsake me not, O LORD:—O my God, ^vbe not far from me.
 * Ps. 27. 1. 22 Make haste ³to help me,—O Lord ^bmy salvation.
 * & 62. 2. 6.
 Isai. 12. 2.

PSALM XXXIX.

To the chief Musician, *even* to * Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

- * 1 Chr. 16. 41. & 25. 1. 1 I SAID, I will ^atake heed to my ways,
 Ps. 62. and 77. title. That I sin not with my tongue:
 * 1 K. 2. 4. I will keep ^bmy mouth with a bridle,
 2 K. 10. 31. While the wicked is before me.
 * Ps. 141. 3. 2 ^dI was dumb with silence,
 Jam. 3. 2. I held my peace, *even* from good;—and my sorrow was ⁵stirred.
 * Col. 4. 5. 3 My heart was hot within me,
 * Ps. 38. 13.

¹ Heb. for halting, Ps. 35. 15.

³ Heb. for my help.

⁵ for my mouth.

² Heb. being living, are strong.

⁴ Heb. a bridle, or muzzle

⁵ Heb. troubled.

cause in hand, and be my advocate" (cp. xxxv. 1; Job xvi. 19–21 notes).

16. *Hear me*] The words in italics are inserted by our translators, and show that they connected this verse closely with v. 15. Others prefer another connexion of thought. David is giving the reason for his silence. He fears lest by some injudicious answer he may give occasion to his enemies, who had already triumphed when he made a false step.

17. *ready to halt*] i.e. In a position where a fall is imminent, and can only be prevented by the interposition of God.

sorrow] Not inner grief, but affliction: the suffering which he endures, the result of God's anger and of his own sin.

18. *For*] Verses 15–18 all begin with the same conjunction: i.e. David abstains from self-justification: (1) because God hears him; (2) because he might give further occasion to his enemies; (3) because he feels his great danger and is conscious of sin; and (4) because he has no course open but confession and contrition.

19. *lively*] i.e. "My enemies are strong, being full of life." Others alter the text and read, "They who are my enemies without cause are strong," i.e. numerous.

20. *Rather, And, requiting evil for good, they hate me, because I follow good.*

22. Note the progressive development of feeling (vv. 1, 9, 15, 22); first, prayer, then confidence in God's knowledge, then hope, then assurance of salvation in God.

XXXIX. This Psalm, closely connected with the preceding, develops one leading thought, accounting for the silence which David had maintained when unjustly ac-

cused. That silence had troubled many of his friends: it had weighed also upon his own spirit; and disquietude and mental struggle produced feelings which find expression in this composition, so pathetic and solemn that it has been selected, together with Ps. xc, by our Church for the Burial Service.

This Psalm, "the most beautiful of all elegies" in the Psalter, bears close resemblance to the book of Job.

After one introductory verse the Psalm is divided into six strophes, each of two verses: the refrain at vv. 5, 11 is marked by Selah.

Jeduthun] One of the three chief musicians, or teachers, of the Levitical chorus; the other two were Asaph and Heman. *Jeduthun's* special connexion with David is indicated by his official title, "the king's seer" (2 Chr. xxxv. 15); he appears to have been previously named Ethan (1 Chr. xv. 19).

1. *I said*] Cp. xxxviii. 13. David's resolution was intimately connected with his consciousness of sin, and with the feeling that his affliction came from God (vv. 8–11).

2. *with silence*] Dumb in silent submission.

even from good] Cp. the Prayer-Book Version, "even from good words." David abstained altogether from speaking lest, together with good words, hasty and wrong ones might escape his lips.

3. The mental struggle and its effects. Silence was impossible, the heart burnt, the conflicting thoughts burst out in flame, and so at last the Psalmist spoke, not to his adversaries but to God. The rest of the Psalm tells us what he said.

While I was musing 'the fire burned :
Then spake I with my tongue,

* Jer. 20. 9.

- 4 LORD, 'make me to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is ;
That I may know 'how frail I am.

/ Ps. 90. 12.
& 119. 94.

- 5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ;
And 'mine age is as nothing before thee :
'Verily every man 'at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

9 Ps. 90. 4.
A ver. 11.
1 Cor. 7. 31.
Jam. 4. 14.
Job 27. 17.
Eccl. 2.
18, 21, 26.
1 Ps. 38. 15.
2 Ps. 44. 13.
& 79. 4.
3 Lev. 10. 3.
Job 40. 4.
Ps. 38. 13.
4 2 Sam. 16.
10.
Job 2. 10.
5 Job 9. 34.
& 13. 21.
6 Job 4. 19.
Hos. 5. 12.
7 ver. 5.
8 1 Chr. 29.
15.
Ps. 119. 19.
2 Cor. 5. 6.
Heb. 11. 13.
1 Pet. 1. 17.
2 Gen. 47. 9.
3 Job 10. 20.
& 14. 5, 6.
4 Job 14. 10,
11, 12.

- 6 Surely every man walketh in 'a vain shew :
Surely they are disquieted in vain :
'He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

- 7 And now, Lord, what wait I for ?—'my hope is in thee,

- 8 Deliver me from all my transgressions :
Make me not 'the reproach of the foolish.

- 9 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ;—because 'thou didst it.

- 10 'Remove thy stroke away from me :
I am consumed by the 'blow of thine hand.

- 11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity,
Thou makest 'his beauty 'to consume away like a moth :
'Surely every man is vanity. Selah.

- 12 Hear my prayer, O LORD,—and give ear unto my cry ;
Hold not thy peace at my tears :

'For I am a stranger with thee,
And a sojourner, 'as all my fathers were.

- 13 'O spare me, that I may recover strength,
Before I go hence, and 'be no more.

1 Or, *what time I have here.*

3 Heb. *an image.*

5 Heb. *that which is to be desired in him to melt away.*

2 Heb. *settled.*

4 Heb. *conflict.*

4. *make me to know*] i.e. Know so as to apply the well-known truth to my heart ; to realize the bearings, as well as the fact, of the shortness and uncertainty of life.

how frail] Better than in the margin. What David wishes to know is, not what time he has to live, but how frail, how short-lived he is ; and to keep that in mind as a preservative against presumption.

5. *handbreadth*] Cp. Matt. vi. 27.

at his best state] Lit. as in the margin. Every man, however settled his position may be, is altogether a vain breath. Cp. lxii. 9, lxxviii. 39 &c.

6. *in a vain shew*] Or, "as a shadow," lit. "image," a shadowy outline, a mere unsubstantial form, or phantom (cp. lxxiii. 20).

they are disquieted in vain] Rather, **they make a loud noise** (like that of many waters or a large assembly) **about nothing**. Their existence is full of noise, but in itself mere nothingness. The two clauses together express the emptiness of the outer show and of the noisy turmoil of life.

riches] A word supplied by our translators, but the Psalmist probably speaks of "corn ;" the farmer heaps up the wheat-sheaves, but a robber may gather them into the garner. Cp. Luke xii. 20.

7. *And now*] i.e. Taking all these things into consideration, what is the Psalmist's

expectation? Hope in a state after death. David's life here is a mere nothing, a shadow, an empty sound ; the hope must therefore have another object. The Psalmist does not openly declare what it was. He was not moved to reveal it : but here, as in numberless other passages, he leaves no alternative but utter disappointment, unless the hope in death is justified hereafter. Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 19 ; Job xiii. 15 note.

8. The word "transgression" is applied specially to such a breach of God's Law as that which David had committed (see xxxii. 1 note).

9. *Thou didst it*] The great word already used (xxii. 31 note) of God's saving work.

10. *stroke*] See xxxviii. 11 note.

11. *Thou corrodest, as by a moth, man's delight*: lit. what he desires and delights in ; health, strength, beauty. Cp. Job xiii. 28 ; Isai. i. 9.

vanity] See v. 5 note ; a most melancholy conclusion but for the suggested hope (v. 7).

12. The "stranger" is one who is merely a guest for a season, the "sojourner" one who lives as a client, under the protection and patronage of a prince or noble : neither has any right, or settled footing, in the land. The earth is not the home of man. An image which is at once humbling and suggestive of a sure hope.

13. This verse is full of reminiscences of

PSALM XL.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- ^a Ps. 27. 14. 1 I ^{1a}WAITED patiently for the LORD;
^{& 37. 7.} And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
^b Ps. 60. 2. 2 He brought me up also out of ^{2a}an horrible pit, out of ^bthe miry clay,
^c Ps. 27. 5. And ^cset my feet upon a rock, and ^destablished my goings.
^d Ps. 37. 23. 3 ^eAnd he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our
^e Ps. 33. 3. God:
^f Ps. 52. 6. ^fMany shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
^g Ps. 34. 8. 4 ^gBlessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust,
Jer. 17. 7. And ^hrespecteth not the proud, nor such as ⁱturn aside to lies.
^h Ps. 101. 3. 5 ^kMany, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou
ⁱ Ps. 125. 5. hast done,
^k Ex. 15. 11. ^jAnd thy thoughts which are to us-ward:
Job 5. 9. ^jThey cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee:
^{& 9. 10.} If I would declare and speak of them,
Ps. 71. 15. They are more than can be numbered.
^{& 139. 6.} 6 ^mSacrifice and offering thou didst not desire;
ⁱ Isai. 55. 8. Mine ears hast thou ^oopened:
^m Ps. 50. 8.
^{& 51. 16.}
Isai. 1. 11.
^{& 66. 3.}
Hos. 6. 6.
Matt. 9. 13. ¹ Heb. *In waiting I waited.* ³ Or, none can order them ⁴ Heb. *digged*, Ex. 21. 6.
^{& 12. 7.} ² Heb. *a pit of noise.* ^{unto thee.}

Job (cp. marg. reff.). The prayer for a respite from pain, restoration for a short season to a state of happiness, is quite compatible with such belief in an hereafter as was obtainable in the absence of a positive Revelation. Such respite as a pledge or sign of the cessation of God's anger was of infinite importance to the Psalmist.

be no more] "No more" so far as regards earth and the things of earth; yet like Enoch, "*who was not* (the same word in Hebrew), for God took him" (Gen. v. 24).

XL. This Psalm belongs to the same cycle as, and is immediately connected with, Ps. xxxix: what the Psalmist there prayed for he now gives thanks for. It appears to have been written during an interval of comparative tranquillity, when David was raised out of the "pit," and felt his position secure.

1. *I waited patiently*] The Hebrew idiom (see marg.) forcibly expresses the intense feeling of expectation; "I waited with my whole heart" (cp. xxxvii. 7).

2. *an horrible pit*] See marg. The association of the two ideas "pit" and "noise" sets before us a warrior falling into a deep pit with crash of arms amid the shouts of enemies.

established my goings] Cp. marg. ref.

3. *a new song*] See marg. ref. note. Here it means a song expressing joy and thanksgiving for new mercies.

see it] i.e. See the deliverance which gave occasion to the hymn.

4. *respecteth not*] Or, "turneth not to:" the word is generally used of apostasy, turning to false gods. The word rendered "the proud" does not occur elsewhere in the plural; in the singular (Rahab) it is specially applied to Egypt, denoting a power

which by loud boasts induces people to put their trust in it, and then fails them. The Psalmist, however, more probably alludes to Job ix. 13 (see note). David may have pointed directly at Absalom and his abettors (see 2 Sam. xv. 1-6).

turn aside to lies] Lit. "Apostates of falsehood," lying apostates, either men who have forsaken the faith, or have broken their oaths of allegiance.

5. *They cannot be reckoned &c.*] No one can set them forth in order when giving thanks to God.

6-8. David expresses the great truth that all outward observances are valueless without obedience and a full concurrence of the will of man with the will of God. This had but a few years previously been declared by Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 22). It is repeated by Psalmists and Prophets (marg. reff.).

Sacrifice &c.] Four kinds of offerings are named. Two represent the conditions of entering into Covenant with God, viz. "sacrifice," the slaughter of a victim, and "offering" or oblation (*mincha*) the fine flour with oil and frankincense presented at the same time on the Altar. With these David contrasts the "opening of the ears," words whose literal meaning (see marg.) is perhaps, that God has opened the Psalmist's ears, given him the faculty of receiving and understanding His law. The rendering by the LXX. quoted in Heb. x. 5, "A body thou hast prepared me," or "fitted me," may be explained by supposing that the opening of the ear was regarded as equivalent to the consecration of all bodily faculties to God's service.

Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come:

In the volume of the book *it is* ^awritten of me,

8 ^oI delight to do thy will, O my God:

Yea, thy law *is* ¹p within my heart.

9 ^oI have preached righteousness in the great congregation:

Lo, ^rI have not refrained my lips,—O LORD, ^ethou knowest.

10 ^oI have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;

I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation:

I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD:

^uLet thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about:

^zMine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up;

They are more than the hairs of mine head:

Therefore ^ymy heart ^zfaileth me.

13 ^bBe pleased, O LORD, to deliver me:

O LORD, make haste to help me.

14 ^cLet them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it;

Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

15 ^bLet them be ^cdesolate for a reward of their shame

That say unto me, Aha, aha.

16 ^dLet all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee:

Let such as love thy salvation ^esay continually, The LORD be magnified.

¹ Heb. in the midst of my bowels.

^z Heb. forsaketh.

^a Luke 24. 44.

^c Ps. 119. 16.

John 4. 34.

Rom. 7. 22.

^z 2 Cor. 3. 3.

^q Ps. 22. 22.

& 35. 18.

^r Ps. 119. 13.

^s Ps. 139. 2.

^t Acts 20. 27.

^u Ps. 43. 3.

& 61. 7.

^z Ps. 38. 4.

^y Ps. 73. 26.

^b Ps. 70. 1.

^c Ps. 35. 4.

26.

& 70. 2, 3.

& 71. 13.

^b Ps. 70. 3.

^c Ps. 73. 19.

^d Ps. 70. 4.

^e Ps. 35. 27.

Burnt offering and sin offering] These are the legal conditions of *remaining* in a Covenant state. To these the Psalmist opposes three points: (1) outward obedience, "Lo, I come;" (2) inner willingness; and (3) open expression of thanksgiving.

7. Or, "Lo I come with a rolled book written concerning me:" probably the Book of the Law, the Pentateuch. David, by presenting himself with it, declares his intention to obey it perfectly: the words "of," or "concerning me" possibly allude to instructions touching the duties of a king (Deut. xvii. 14-20). The typical application to our Lord is very striking. As David presented himself before God in spirit with the Book of the Law describing his duties and rights, so the Saviour came with the word of God bearing witness to Him and expressing that will which He fulfilled.

8. *heart*] Lit. as in the margin; the word in Hebrew physiology designating the very innermost being, the deepest affections. The characteristic of the New Covenant is that the Law is written in the heart by the Spirit (Jerem. xxxi. 33); but this was anticipated in those who penetrated beyond the outer forms, and the true Israelite was always described as one who had the Law

in his heart (cp. xxxvii. 31; Isai. li. 7).

11. With this verse begins the second part of the Psalm, which runs altogether in a different strain.

Withhold] Translated "refrained" in r.

9. As the Psalmist had not refrained or "shut up" his lips, so he prays that God will not "shut up" His mercies, or "bowels of compassion."

12. The deep and bitter consciousness of sin in this verse belongs altogether to a late part of David's life. It was applied by the Fathers to our Saviour as bearing the sins of the Church.

to look up] Or, "to see." David speaks twice before of the failure of sight under the combined working of mental and physical anguish (xxi. 9, xxxviii. 10).

faileth me] Lit. "hath forsaken me." David's own heart is like a false friend deserting him in his bitter need.

13. *to help me*] Or, "to my help," the help on which David was justified in counting, since it is secured to the faithful by God's promise (xxxviii. 22).

14. The following verses are repeated in Ps. lxx. The question as to which is the original is one on which critics differ. . .

^f Ps. 70. 5.
^g 1 Pet. 5. 7.

17 ^f But I *am* poor and needy; *yet* ^g the Lord thinketh upon me:
 Thou *art* my help and my deliverer;
 Make no tarrying, O my God.

PSALM XLI.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

^a Prov. 14.
 21.

1 BLESSED ^a is he that considereth ¹ the poor:
 The LORD will deliver him ² in time of trouble.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive;
 And he shall be blessed upon the earth:

^b Ps. 27. 12.

^b And ³ thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing:
 Thou wilt ⁴ make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me:

^c Heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

^c 2 Chr. 30.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me,

When shall he die, and his name perish?

Ps. 6. 2.
 & 147. 3.

6 And if he come to see me, he ^d speaketh vanity:

His heart gathereth iniquity to itself;

^d Ps. 12. 2.
 Prov. 26.
 24, 25, 26.

When he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me:

Against me do they devise ^e my hurt.

8 ^e An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him:

And *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

^e Job 19. 19.
 Ps. 65. 12.

9 ^e Yea, ^f mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, ^g

¹ Or, *the weak*, or, *sick*.
² Heb. *in the day of evil*.

³ Or, *do not thou deliver*.
⁴ Heb. *turn*.
⁵ Heb. *evil to me*.

⁶ Heb. *A thing of Belial*.
⁷ Heb. *the man of my peace*.

17. The transition in the original is very animated: "And as for me poor and needy—the Lord will care for me: my help and deliverer art Thou: O my God, tarry not."

XLI. This Psalm which completes the first book, is remarkable for its personal character. It appears to have been written about the time when Absalom's conspiracy was nearly matured after the arrival of Ahithophel (v. 9), and before the king's departure from Jerusalem, when the disease was still so severe as to keep him on his bed (v. 3). The structure is regular, four strophes, each of three verses.

1. *considereth*] With the kindness of a man who does not misinterpret affliction. *poor*] Or, "afflicted." David does not speak of poverty, but of weakness, a state of exhaustion and prostration.

time of trouble] More forcibly in the marg. *unto the will*] Lit. "the soul," equivalent to "desire" (cp. xxxv. 25 note).

3. *thou wilt make*] Lit. "Thou hast changed all his couch in his sickness." "Thou hast," indicates the perfect confidence that the prayer is heard; and "changing all the couch" probably means changing the patient's state entirely, i.e. from a bed of sickness to perfect health. This gives two gradations; first, the Lord supports and comforts the sufferer on his bed, and then raises him from it. David describes his

own condition and feelings in the form of prayer offered by a friend on his behalf.

4. *I said*] The "I" is emphatic. "I for my part said." Verse 2 was his friend's prayer, "I for my own part," adds the Psalmist, "prayed simply for mercy and healing, for I was conscious of my great sin." Here as in other Psalms of the same date, David attributes his visitation to his sin (xxxviii. 3-5, 17, 18, xxxix. 9-11, xl. 12).

6. *And if he come to see*] Such a visit as one from Ahithophel, in whose face the clear-sighted king saw the indications of malice and triumphant hate.

he speaketh vanity] Hypocritical words of condolence, or of hope of the king's recovery. *his heart gathereth*] The false friend watches the symptoms of disease in order to give point to slanderous imputations, which on leaving the sick chamber he takes care shall be rapidly spread.

8. *An evil disease*] Lit. "a thing of Belial (xviii. 4) is poured upon him:" something which proceeds from crime and bears witness to it, a hopeless disease, is poured into him, entering like molten ore into his whole system.

9. *mine own familiar friend*] Lit. as in the marg. (Jer. xx. 10). Ahithophel, David's counsellor, was sent for by Absalom. The implicit confidence placed in Ahithophel is described in 2 Sam. xvi. 23. Ahithophel's

Which did eat of my bread, hath ¹lifted up *his* heel against me. ¹Obad. 7.

10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me,
And raise me up, that I may requite them.

11 By this I know that thou favourest me,
Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity,
And ²settest me before thy face for ever.

13 ³Blessed be the LORD God of Israel

From everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

² Ps. 34. 15.

³ Ps. 106. 48.

PSALMS XLII. & XLIII.

To the chief Musician, ²Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

1 AS the hart ³panteth after the water brooks,

So panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 ⁴My soul thirsteth for God, for ⁵the living God :

When shall I come and appear before God ?

3 ⁶My tears have been my meat day and night,

While ⁷they continually say unto me, Where ⁸is thy God ?

4 When I remember these *things*, ⁹I pour out my soul in me :

For I had gone with the multitude, ¹⁰I went with them to the
house of God.

¹ Heb. *magnified*.

struction of the sons, &c.

25, 5.

² Or, A Psalm giving in-

struction of the sons, &c. See 1 Chr. 6, 33, 37, &

³ Heb. *brayeth*.

⁴ Ps. 63. 1.

& 84. 2.

John 7. 37.

⁵ 1 Thess. 1. 9.

⁶ Ps. 80. 5.

& 102. 9.

⁷ ver. 10.

Ps. 79. 10.

& 115. 2.

⁸ Job 30. 16.

Ps. 62. 8.

⁹ Isai. 30. 20.

hatred of David has been traced to his connexion with Uriah (2 Sam. xv. 12 note).

lifted up his heel] Lit. "magnified his heel," i.e. lifted up his foot to trample upon me, as a conqueror puts his foot upon the neck of a prostrate foe (Josh. x. 24). The application to Judas is made by our Lord Himself (Joh. xiii. 18).

10. *requite them*] It was the duty of David, as king and judge, not only to put down the conspirators, but to inflict upon them just and adequate punishment (cp. Rom. xiii. 14).

11. *because &c.*] Or, "for my enemy will not shout (in triumph) over me."

12. *for ever*] A phrase expressing not only restoration to God's favour and lifelong peace (Job xxxvi. 7) but, also—comparing it with other passages (xvi. 11, xvii. 15, xxiii. 6, xxx. 12)—the distinct intimation of a hope of immortality.

13. This verse does not form part of the Psalm, but marks the close of the first book; a similar doxology is repeated at the end of the three following books: see Introduction, p. 94.

XLII. This Psalm is attributed in the inscription to the sons of Korah. The circumstances under which it was composed point to the time when David and his faithful followers fled from Absalom. Many points of resemblance with other Psalms might justify the assumption that it was composed by David. Other considerations, however, especially some peculiarities of diction, may point to one of the family of Korah, who was specially attached to the king and deeply imbued with his spirit; but who was for a season separated from

David, and was sojourning in an outlying district among a people of rude, wild habits, if not disaffected to the king, yet feeling little sympathy with the national religion, and having no regard for its ministers.

The Psalm consists of two parts. Each part may be subdivided into two strophes, marking distinctly the rhythmical and lyrical character of the composition, which was probably adapted to the Temple service, after the return from exile.

1. *As the hart panteth*] Or, "longeth." The original word occurs once more only (Joel i. 20, "cry"). An upward longing movement of the soul towards the object of its intense desire is intended.

water brooks] Or, "water-courses." Lit. deep channels, or ravines (see Job vi. 15-18 note). The gazelle is constantly found resorting to these rocky ravines.

2. *the living God*] The source and sustainer of all life (see r. 8); probably also with reference to the expression "living waters," the quickening and restorative streams, for which the thirsty soul longeth.

before God] i.e. in the Temple, or Tabernacle; a common idiom which well expresses the intense realization of God's Presence in the Sanctuary.

4. Or, *Those things will I remember and I will pour out (in prayer) my soul upon me*; i.e. I will turn my thoughts to other things, to the loved and forgotten past, and will let my feelings overflow in a stream of devout affection.

for I had gone &c.] Or, *how I passed on in the throng*; how I preceded them to the house of God: the "throng" probably denoting a dense crowd of pilgrims; "pre-

With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

^o ver. 11.

Ps. 43. 5.

^a Lam. 3. 24.

5 ^o Why art thou ¹ cast down, O my soul?

And *why* art thou disquieted in me?

^a Hope thou in God: for I shall yet ² praise him

³ For the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me:

Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan,

And of the Hermonites, from ⁴ the hill Mizar.

¹ Jer. 4. 20.

Ezek. 7. 26.

^a Ps. 88. 7.

Lev. 25. 21.

Deut. 28. 8.

Ps. 133. 3.

^m Job 35. 10.

Ps. 32. 7.

& 63. 6.

& 149. 5.

ⁿ Ps. 38. 6.

& 43. 2.

^o ver. 3.

Joel 2. 17.

Mic. 7. 10.

^p ver. 5.

Ps. 43. 5.

¹ Heb. bowed down.

² Or, give thanks.

³ Or, his presence is salva-

tion.

⁴ Or, the little hill, Ps. 133. 3.

⁵ Or, killing.

ceding," the stately, onward movement in a public procession.

a multitude that kept holyday] Or, **keeping festival** (cp. Exod. xxiii. 14). The clause describes a vast crowd of worshippers, pilgrims from all parts of Palestine, assembled at Jerusalem for the three great festivals. Cp. Isai. xxx. 29. These processions were usually made with the accompaniments of music and song (2 Sam. vi. 5). Although all the expressions in this verse well befit a Levite, they are not less appropriate in the mouth of David, a king, who was not merely a spectator or worshipper, but the leader of public devotions.

5. cast down] The form of the Hebrew word is very peculiar, and conveys the impression of utter prostration. Our Lord describes His own agony in the word used by the LXX. in translating this expression. (Matt. xxvi. 38.)

O my soul] This address to the soul rests upon a deep truth of inward experience. The higher spiritual principle controls and guides the emotions.

disquieted in me] Or, **why moanest thou over me?** The soul bewails with noise and turmoil the woes of the Psalmist.

hope] Or, **wait thou for God.** "To wait" implies patient submissive expectation, bound up with hope, but with less brightness than resignation (cp. Job xiii. 15).

for the help of his countenance] This expresses the meaning of the Hebrew text as it stands: but a very slight alteration gives here also the clause with which v. 11 and xliii. 5 end, "the health of my countenance (i.e. my salvation) and my God." The emendation is highly probable; it is sup-

ported by some Versions, and by most modern critics.

6. therefore] Prostration of spirit serves but to bring God's former mercies to remembrance.

the Hermonites] Lit. **the Hermons**: probably the mountain ridges which extend in a southerly direction to the east of the Jordan. One of the heights may have borne the name Mizar, i.e. small, but there are no traces of such a name. Some take the name "Hermons" to include the mountainous district. from Hermon to the Dead Sea.

7. The word rendered "waterspouts" occurs elsewhere (2 Sam. v. 8, A.V. "gutter") probably in the sense of a water-course, or trench cut in the rock: here it seems to designate the deep ravines which cleave the highlands of the trans-Jordanic district. In such ravines the torrent from the rain-cloud sweeps in a long line of foam down the steep declivity, bearing huge fragments of rocks, and producing a roaring and continuous sound.

all thy waves &c.] These words occur without a change in Jonah ii. 3; the probability being that the Prophet took them from the Psalmist.

8. I will say] The form of the Hebrew word betokens desire, "I would fain say." my rock] The steep cliff, inaccessible to foes, is meant (xviii. 2 note).

oppression] The expression does not imply that the Psalmist was in captivity, but that he was surrounded by men who hated him.

10. As with a sword in my bones] Or, **as it were breaking my bones.** The word in the original is used for murder in the 6th Commandment.

Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

- 1 ^a JUDGE me, O God, and ^b plead my cause against an ^c *ungodly nation*:
 O deliver me ^d from the deceitful and unjust man. ^a Ps. 26. 1.
[&] 35. 24.
^b Ps. 35. 1
- 2 For thou *art* the God of ^e my strength: why dost thou cast me off? ^c Ps. 28. 7
- ^a Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? ^d Ps. 42. 9.
- 3 ^e O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me;
 Let them bring me unto ^f thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. ^e Ps. 40. 11
[&] 57. 3.
- 4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God ^g my exceeding joy:
 Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God. ^f Ps. 3. 4.
- 5 ^h Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
 And why art thou disquieted within me?
 Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God. ^g Ps. 42. 5,
 11.

PSALM XLIV.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

- 1 WE have heard with our ears, O God,
^a Our fathers have told us,
What work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. ^a Ex. 12. 26.
 Ps. 78. 3.
- 2 How ^b thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and
 plantedst them; ^b Ex. 15. 17.
 Deut. 7. 1.
 Ps. 78. 55.
[&] 80. 8.
- ¹ Or, *merciful*. ² Heb. *from a man of deceit and iniquity*. ³ Heb. *the gladness of my joy*.

XLIII. This Psalm is admitted to be a continuation of Ps. xlii. It was composed by the same author, and at the same time.

1. *ungodly nation*] Or, "anation not pious," without religious principles or feelings. The people among whom the Psalmist was sojourning were probably a mixed race of wild, rude habits.

man] Either some leader and representative of the wicked, or the word may be taken collectively.

3. *thy light and thy truth*] Perhaps the Urim and Thummim; David had sent back the Ark with Zadok the High Priest to Jerusalem (2 Sam. xv. 25). There is a slight, but perhaps significant, difference between this expression used here and the "mercy and truth" of two Davidic Psalms (margin. ref.).

thy holy hill] Mount Zion, where the Sanctuary was placed in David's reign.

tabernacles] At a later period a Psalmist would probably have said Thy Temple. He chooses here a word which signifies "indwelling": the place where God manifests His Presence.

4. *God my exceeding joy*] Lit. "the God of the joy of my exultation," source and sustainer of all gladness and bliss. Cp. 2 Cor. i. 3-6.

XLIV. The mention of the Korahites, the place of this Psalm in the Psalter together with other notices, indicate the reign of David,

when the nation, as such, was free from idolatry, and engaged in frequent wars, as the date of the composition of this Psalm. The occasion was possibly an incursion of Edomites, while David was engaged in the Syrian campaign. The Israelites then suffered severely, losing so vast a number that Joab was sent to bury the slain while David completed the subjugation of Edom (cp. 2 Sam. viii. 13; Ps. lx. inscription; and 1 K. xi. 15). No other period can be pointed out which accounts more satisfactorily for the combination of humiliation and confidence, mourning and hope, earnest remonstrance and unshaken trust exhibited in this Psalm.

In the Maccabean period this Psalm, peculiarly adapted to express the feelings of the people at that time, was continually in their mouths. Levites daily stood up in the pulpits and cried aloud, "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?" (v. 23); and hence they were called "awakeners."

The Psalm has three main divisions, very distinctly marked; at the end of v. 8 by Selah, and of 16 and 22 by change of tone. The strophes are of unequal length, increasing or shortening in accordance with the Psalmist's feelings.

2. *cast them out*] Most commentators render these words, "but Thou didst spread them out," i.e. the Israelites, like the branches of a great tree (cp. lxxx. 9-13).

How thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

- c Deut. 8. 17. 3 For cthey got not the land in possession by their own sword,
 Josh. 24. 12. Neither did their own arm save them :
 But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy coun-
 tenance,
 d Deut. 4. 37. dBecause thou hadst a favour unto them.
 e 7. 7, 8. 4 eThou art my King, O God :
 f Ps. 74. 12. Command deliverances for Jacob.
 g Dan. 8. 4. 5 Through thee fwill we push down our enemies :
 Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up
 against us.
 h Ps. 33. 16. 6 For hI will not trust in my bow,
 Hos. 1. 7. Neither shall my sword save me.
 7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies,
 And hast hput them to shame that hated us.
 i Ps. 40. 14. 8 iIn God we boast all the day long,
 j Ps. 34. 2. And praise thy name for ever. Selah.
 k Jer. 9. 24. 9 But kthou hast cast off, and put us to shame ;
 l Rom. 2. 17. And goest not forth with our armies.
 m Ps. 60. 1. 10 Thou makest us to lturn back from the enemy :
 n 74. 1. And they which hate us spoil for themselves.
 o 88. 14. 11 nThou hast given us llike sheep appointed for meat ;
 p 108. 11. And hast o"scattered us among the heathen.
 q Lev. 26. 17. 12 oThou sellest thy people 2for nought,
 r Deut. 28. 26. And dost not increase thy wealth by their price.
 s Josh. 7. 8. 13 pThou makest us a reproach to our neighbours,
 t Rom. 8. 36. A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
 u Deut. 4. 27. 14 uThou makest us a byword among the heathen,
 v 28. 64. rA shaking of the head among the people.
 w Ps. 60. 1. 15 My confusion is continually before me,
 x Isai. 52. 3. And the shame of my face hath covered me,
 y Jer. 15. 13. 16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth ;
 z Deut. 28. 37. sBy reason of the enemy and avenger.
 aa Ps. 79. 4. 17 tAll this is come upon us ; yet have we not forgotten thee,
 ab Jer. 24. 9. 2 Heb. without riches.
 ac 2 K. 19. 21.
 ad Job 16. 4.
 ae Ps. 22. 7.
 af Ps. 8. 2.
 ag Dan. 9. 13.

¹ Heb. as sheep of meat.

² Heb. without riches.

4. *command*] As an act of kingly might : (cp. cxxxiii. 3) Lev. xxv. 21 ; Deut. xxviii. 8.

5. *push down*] The Hebrew word applies properly to horned beasts, the wild bull, &c., frequently taken as symbols of strength and force (Deut. xxxiii. 17). The expression shews that the power of the nation was not broken, and that the reverse was but temporary.

tread them under] This continues the metaphor ; for the fulfilment, see 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14.

11. *scattered*] The defeat appears to have taken place beyond the frontier, so that the fugitives were driven among the neighbouring tribes. All the expressions indicate a fearful defeat and slaughter, but not a conquest, certainly not a capture of Jerusalem. This Psalm was evidently sung while the invasion was still proceeding.

12. *for nought*] Lit. "for no-wealth," indicating a feeling that a people so cast off are treated as worthless (cp. Deut. xxxii. 30 :

Judg. ii. 14, iii. 8, iv. 2 : to the first of which passages the Psalmist not improbably refers). The assertion that God gains nothing by giving up His people may have a still deeper meaning, and imply that He must have a special intention, viz. of testing their faith, or of bringing them to repentance. Cp. the equally frequent statement that, when tried and restored, they are ransomed without price.

13. The Psalmist exhausts the terms for insults such as at every season of national calamity were heaped upon Israel by Philistines, Edomites, and the "children of Lot."

16. *avenger*] Lit. him that taketh vengeance. An expression probably implying that the war was carried on by the enemy to recover lost territory, or to avenge former defeats.

17. This passage claims for the Israelites not only freedom from the national tendency to idolatry, but thorough sincerity in

Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

18 Our heart is not turned back,

"Neither have our ¹steps declined from thy way;

19 Though thou hast sore broken us in ²the place of dragons,
And covered us ³with the shadow of death.

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God,
Or ⁴'stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 "Shall not God search this out?

For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 ^bYea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long;

We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 ^cAwake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?

Arise, ^dcast us not off for ever.

24 ^eWherefore hidest thou thy face,

And forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For ^four soul is bowed down to the dust:

Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise ^gfor our help,

And redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

^a Job 23. 11.

Ps. 119. 51.

^b Isai. 34. 13.

& 35. 7.

^c Ps. 23. 4.

^d Job 11. 13.

Ps. 68. 31.

^e Job 31. 14.

Ps. 139. 1.

Jer. 17. 10.

^f Rom. 8. 36.

^g Ps. 7. 6,

& 35. 23.

& 59. 4, 5.

^h ver. 9.

ⁱ Job 13. 24.

Ps. 13. 1.

& 88. 14.

^j Ps. 119. 25.

PSALM XLV.

To the chief Musician ^aupon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, ^bMaschil, A Song ^cPs. 69, & 80. title.

1 MY heart ^dis inditing a good matter:

I speak of the things which I have made touching the king:

¹ Or, goings.

² Or, of instruction.

³ Heb. boileth, or, bubbleth up.

⁴ Heb. a help for us.

religion and consistent integrity of life. The time must have been one of national reformation; not, however, preceded by apostasy, as was the case in the time of Josiah, and still more so in that of the Maccabees; but a thorough, earnest, and successful reformation, such as was undoubtedly that which took place in the early part of David's reign at Jerusalem. The Korahites might well have composed and sung the Psalm at that time, after a severe, though temporary reverse, as a solemn act of national supplication.

19. *the place of dragons*] *The place of jackals*: the place where jackals troop together to prey upon the bodies of the slain (lxiii. 10).

21. *search this out*] This implies far more than a mere suppression of idolatrous worship. The writer must have felt that the nation, as a whole, was clear of the guilt of apostasy.

22. *for thy sake*] In David's mind, and in that of the Levites, the cause of Israel was the cause of God: they fought for Him, and died for Him. Cp. St. Paul's application of the words (marg. ref.).

23. The sleep of God implies an apparent suspension of his providential government, when His foes are triumphant, and His servants are defeated.

O Lord] Not Jehovah, but Adonai: the Psalmist does not use the name which specially recalls the spiritual Covenant, but

one which implies dominion: he appeals to the King and God of the nation.

XLV. This Psalm celebrates the nuptials of an anointed king.

The imagery may have been suggested by the nuptials of a king of Israel or Judah, but the direct ascription of divinity to the king (v. 6) precludes its limitation to an earthly event. The old traditional interpretation of the Hebrew Church, confirmed by the authority of the New Testament (Heb. i. 8, 9) regards this Psalm as directly Messianic. See Introduction, p. 103. The ideal before the mind of the writer is that of a Prince combining all the characteristics of the best kings of Judah with a divine nature, such as is distinctly intimated in ancient prophecies. The daughter of the King is the nation in its religious aspect, or the Church: her attendants, the honourable women, themselves also daughters of kings, represent foreign nations brought into willing submission to the Messiah. The dominion of the King and of the Bride administered by their royal offspring (v. 16) extends to the ends of the earth, and will endure to the end of time.

The Psalm consists of two principal parts (vv. 2-9, 10-17) with a brief introduction and conclusion. The structure is highly artistic.

Shoshannim] i.e. Lilies, to which a certain sacredness attached (cp. 1 K. vii. 19, 22, 26). Probably the tune or melody

My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men :

^a Luke 4. 22.

^a Grace is poured into thy lips :

Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

^b Isai. 49. 2.

3 Gird thy ^b sword upon thy thigh, ^c O most mighty,

Heb. 4. 12.

With thy glory and thy majesty.

^c Isai. 9. 6.

4 ^d And in thy majesty ¹ ride prosperously

^d Rev. 6, 2.

Because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness ;

And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows *are* sharp—in the heart of the king's enemies ;

Whereby the people fall under thee.

^e Ps. 93. 2.

6 ^e Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever :

Heb. 1. 8.

The sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

^f Ps. 33. 5.

7 ^f Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness :

^g Isai. 61. 1.

Therefore ² O God, thy God, ^h hath anointed thee

^h 1 K. 1.

With the oil ⁱ of gladness above thy fellows.

39, 40.

ⁱ Ps. 21. 6.

¹ Heb. *prosper thou, ride thou.*

² Or, *O God.*

to which the Psalm was sung or recited ; but the word may be metaphorical, equivalent to beautiful maidens, brides, or bridesmaids : and the meaning may be a Psalm to be recited to a melody adapted to a bridal solemnity.

The combination of "Maschil," a song of instruction, with "a song of loves" is peculiar, and indicates probably the religious and mystic character of this Psalm.

1. *is inditing*] See marg. The heart "gushes," bubbles up, like boiling water, or a spring, stirred and forced by an inner commotion of joyful feelings. Contrast xxxix. 1, 2.

a good matter] A good word, a hymn full of goodness and joy.

I speak of the things] Or, I speak ; my works (my poems) are for the King, i.e. I speak (moved by an inward impulse), and all my words have but one object, the praise of the King.

my tongue] The tongue expresses the inward thought fluently, rapidly, either as a short-hand writer or as "a ready scribe" (cp. Ezra vii. 6).

2. *fairer*¹ The beauty of the King is placed first with peculiar fitness in a bridal hymn. Beauty was regarded by the Hebrew as the outward manifestation of inherent nobleness, or of a nature akin to the divine. In this case the beauty is expressly said to be above that of a man (cp. l. 2), an expression which marks the object of the hymn to be One standing apart from and above those whose nature He shares. The representation is unquestionably ideal : it refers to the Messiah. Cp. Isai. xxxiii. 17 ; Song of Sol. v. 10.

grace] The grace of sweetness, loveliness, has its seat upon the lips of the King ; from such lips none but gracious words can flow : cp. the marg. ref. with Isai. lxi. 1-3. •

Therefore] The blessing is inseparable from the spiritual gifts and graces visibly repre-

sented in the Person of the Glorified Messiah. Such a declaration would hardly have been made of a mere earthly king.

3. *O most mighty*] In xxiv. 8 twice used of the King of Glory ; see also marg. ref., where the same word, combined with El, is applied to the Messiah. "Glory and majesty" are the attributes of God (xcvi. 7), of which those of Messiah, and of the king as type of Messiah (xxi. 5), are the reflection. The sword of Messiah (the sharp two-edged sword of Revelation, i. 16, xix. 15) is the Word of God (marg. ref.).

4. *ride prosperously*] Lit. "break forth, ride ;" the latter word means either "drive a war-chariot," or "ride a war-horse." The King goes forth, like the Sun (xix. 4-6), "conquering and to conquer."

because of i.e. For the sake of truth and the meekness which is one with righteousness. The one object of the wars of God's Anointed is to make the attributes incarnate in Him triumphant (cp. Zech. ix. 9).

thy right hand shall teach] His right hand clears the course for Himself, and may be said by a bold figure to teach Him the terrible things which it executes.

5. Lit. *Thine arrows are sharp—peoples fall under thee—in the heart of the enemies of the King.* The description is abrupt but vivid. The Psalmist sees the battlefield, sharp arrows flying, people falling ; arrows are in their hearts.

6. *Thy throne, O God*] Such words cannot possibly be addressed to an earthly king. The Person before the Psalmist's mind was a visible manifestation of the Godhead ; the ideal King of Whom his earthly sovereign was an imperfect type. Cp. the title given to the Messiah, "Immanuel," "God with us" (Isai. viii. 8).

for ever and ever] i.e. absolute eternity. 7. *God, thy God*] Some render, "Therefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee." This agrees with the preceding verse, "Thy

- 8 ²All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,
 Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.
 9 ¹King's daughters *were* among thy honourable women :
 "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.
 10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ;
 "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ;
 11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty :
 "For he *is* thy Lord ; and worship thou him.
 12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift ;
Even ²the rich among the people shall intreat ¹thy favour.
 13 ²The king's daughter *is* all glorious within :
 Her clothing *is* of wrought gold.
 14 ²She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework :

² Cant. 1. 3.¹ Cant. 6. 8.² See
1 K. 2. 19.² See Dent.
21. 13.² Ps. 95. 6.
Isai. 54. 5.² Ps. 22. 29.
& 72. 10.
Isai. 49. 23.
& 60. 3.² Rev. 19.
7, 8.² Cant. 1. 4.¹ Heb. *thy face*.

throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The Version in the Prayer-Book inserts "even" before "thy God."

oil of gladness] *i.e.* With joy symbolized on festive occasions by precious unguents. The gladness flows (cp. cxxxiii. 2) from the head of the King to the skirts of His raiment; it is diffused over every portion of His mystic body.

above thy fellows] *i.e.* Above all other kings. Cp. 1 K. iii. 11-13.

8. Lit. "Myrrh and aloes, cassia are all thy garments," *i.e.* thy garments are so impregnated with precious odours that they are nought but odours themselves.

The latter half of the verse may probably be rendered "from palaces of ivory, strains of harps delight thee." As the bridegroom enters the palace, where the queen awaits him, the minstrels welcome him with their harps.

9. *thy honourable women*] Lit. "Thy precious ones." It could scarcely be said of any of the later kings of Judah that kings' daughters were among the attendants upon his queen. Like other peculiar traits in the description this is wholly ideal; it has its true, though mystical interpretation, in the Churches which recognize their Lord in Christ.

the queen] The Hebrew word is not that which generally designates the queens of Israelitish princes. It is a poetical word, and denotes a peculiarity in the choice and position of the bride. Mystically it must refer to the Church in her perfect purity and unity (Rev. xix. 7, 8, xxi. 2).

in gold of Ophir] See Job xxiii. 24 note. It was well-known in David's time (1 Chr. xxix. 4).

10. True and forcible is the application to the Church; she has one work, to give herself up to Christ; one sacrifice to make—that of all associations and bonds alien to Him.

O daughter] The Queen is at the transition point from maidenhood to womanhood: just entering the King's palace with old

associations lingering in her spirit, which give a peculiar charm to this word of gracious welcome.

11. *So shall the king*] The love of the King is thus represented as won by that love of the Bride which alone makes her other charms attractive.

worship] The word is used of the obeisance offered unto a king by his wife (1 K. i. 16); but it has a peculiar significance as applied to the relation between Christ and His Church.

12. Tyre represents the wealth of the heathen world; her princely merchants offer gifts, tokens of willing submission and allegiance to the queen. The historical events to which such a statement could apply are the marriages of Solomon, and of Jehoram, who married Athaliah the granddaughter of a king of Tyre. The latter marriage would not be celebrated by Korahites, moved by the Spirit of God.

13. *all glorious within*] *all glory inwardly*. The word rendered "within" is used of the interior cedar lining of the Holy Place, and of the gold lining of the Holy of Holies (1 K. vi. 18, 22). Others take the phrase to mean "in the inner chamber of the palace," where the bride first takes off her veil; a point applicable to the true Bride whose beauty will only be really discerned when she enters the Eternal Palace.

of wrought gold] Woven with threads of gold.

14. *brought unto the king*] In the former part of the Psalm the Bride is brought by the king into his chambers. Now the King is represented as awaiting the Bride. This suits the symbolical, better than the merely historical, explanation (cp. Rev. xix. 7, 8).

Again, the virgins who attend upon the Queen are brought to the King; whereas in Eastern harems they are under the absolute control of their mistress; this deviation from national usage may be accounted for by reference to the inner meaning: pure, virginal, saintly spirits, who form the "companions" of the heavenly Bride.

The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought:
They shall enter into the king's palace.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
* Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

* 1 Pet. 2. 9.
Rev. 1. 6.
& 5. 10.
& 20. 6.
' Mal. 1. 11.

17 'I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations:
Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

PSALM XLVI.

* Ps. 48, &
66.

* 1 Chr. 15.
20.

* Ps. 62. 7, 8.
& 91. 2.

^b Deut. 4. 7.
Ps. 145. 18.

^c Ps. 93. 3, 4.
Jer. 5. 22.

^d Matt. 7. 25.
^e See Isai.

8. 7.
^e Ps. 48. 1, 8.
Isai. 60. 14.

To the chief Musician ¹ for the sons of Korah, * A Song upon * Alamoth.

1 GOD is our "refuge and strength,—^ba very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into ²the midst of the sea;

3 ^cThough the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 There is ^da river, the streams whereof shall make glad ^ethe city
of God,
The holy ^{place} of the tabernacles of the most High.

¹ Or, of.

² Heb. *the heart of the seas.*

needlework] In embroidery of divers colours. Cp. 2 Sam. xiii. 18. The gold may symbolize the perfect purity and natural dignity of the Bride, the many-coloured and beautiful raiment her possession of all Christian graces.

16. *of thy fathers*] Words addressed to the King: the "fathers" are those "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. ix. 5).

This promise had a partial fulfilment in Solomon's reign; but the mystical meaning is more in accordance with the whole strain of prophecy. See marg. ref.

17. The final address of the Psalmist is also to the King. The work of all Christ's messengers, whether Prophets or Evangelists, is simply to make His name known. The last words of the Psalm leave doubt as to its Messianic character. The people (lit. the peoples, i.e. the Gentiles), accepting Christ as their King, praise Him "as God over all, blessed for evermore" (Rom. ix. 5).

XLVI. This Psalm and the two following have the same general subject and character. They express the perfect confidence of true Israelites in the Presence and protection of God at a season of imminent and terrible danger. Some allusions, and the resemblance between these Psalms and portions of Isaiah, may seem to point to the invasion of the Assyrians under Sennacherib. It seems, however, on the whole more likely that they were composed when the kingdom of Judah was invaded by the combined forces of Moab, Ammon, and Edom in the reign of Jehoshaphat (see 2 Chr. xx). See notes on vv. 7, 8, xlvii. 9, and xlviii. 4.

The expressions, however, are for the most

part general, well adapted for any season of severe trial; and as such they were adopted by the Reformed Church of Germany in Luther's grand paraphrase of the Psalm.

The Psalm has three equal portions, each of four lines, marked distinctly at the close by the musical term Selah. The second and third portions have also the same refrain (vv. 7, 11), which may possibly have been omitted by a transcriber at the end of the first portion, after v. 3.

Alamoth] Lit. "virgins:" it is a musical term, and probably signifies that the Psalm was to be recited by alto or soprano voices, principally by maidens. Cp. marg. ref.: Ex. xv. 20, 21.

2. *though the earth be removed*] Or, **changed** (as in xv. 4), i.e. undergoes a series of convulsions which change its condition and aspect. Confidence is grounded on God's Presence.

be carried] Or, **be hurled** with violent motion.

into the midst of the sea] Lit., as in marg. The plural "seas" is equivalent to the word ocean, or the vast deep out of which the mountains were raised in Creation (cp. Gen. i. 9, 10).

3. *roar*] The marg. ref. leave no doubt as to the allegorical meaning: the convulsions of nature represent national revolutions.

4. *a river*] This figure is expressly chosen to represent the contrast between the serene and tranquil influence of God's Presence among His people (see Isai. xxxiii. 21; Rev. xxii. 2), and the convulsions described in the preceding verses.

tabernacles] The plural refers (as in xliii. 3) to the Sanctuary or Tabernacle with its Courts.

- 5 God *is* ¹in the midst of her; *she* shall not be moved :
God shall help her, ¹*and that* right early.
- 6 ²The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved :
He uttered his voice, ²*the* earth melted.
- 7 ³The LORD of hosts *is* with us ;
The God of Jacob *is* ³our refuge. Selah.
- 8 ⁴Come, behold the works of the LORD,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.
- 9 ⁵He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ;
⁵He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder ;
⁵He burneth the chariot in the fire.
- 10 Be still, and know that I *am* God :
⁶I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
- 11 ⁷The LORD of hosts *is* with us ;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

¹ Deut. 23. 14.
Isai. 12. 6.
Ezek. 43.
7. 9.
Hos. 11. 9.
Joel 2. 27.
Zeph. 3. 15.
Zech. 2. 5.
² Ps. 2. 1.
³ Josh. 2. 9.
⁴ ver. 11.
Num. 14. 9.
2 Chr. 13. 12.
⁵ Ps. 66. 5.
⁶ Isai. 2. 4.
⁷ Ps. 76. 3.
⁸ Ezek. 39. 9.
⁹ Isai. 2. 11.

⁷ ver. 7.

PSALM XLVII.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm ¹for the sons of Korah.

- 1 O ¹CLAP your hands, all ye people ;
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
- 2 For the LORD most high *is* ²terrible ;
²He *is* a great King over all the earth.
- 3 ³He shall subdue the people under us,
And the nations under our feet.
- 4 He shall choose our ⁴inheritance for us,
The excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.
- 5 ⁵God *is* gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

¹ Isai. 55. 12.

² Deut. 7. 21.
Neh. 1. 5.
Ps. 76. 12.
³ Mal. 1. 14.
⁴ Ps. 18. 47.

⁵ 1 Pet. 1. 4.

⁷ Ps. 68. 24.

¹ Heb. *when the morning appeareth*. See Exod. 14. 24, 27. 2 Chr. 20.

20. Ps. 30. 5. & 143. 8.

³ Heb. *an high place for us*, Ps. 9. 9.
⁴ Or, *of*.

5. *right early*] Rather, at the approach of morning (see marg.): i.e., at the time of deliverance which comes like dawn after the gloomy night.

6. This verse explains the figures used in vv. 2, 3. The same words (rendered "rage" and "roar," "moved" and "removed") are used in both places.

melted] Or, *was dissolved*; an expression frequently used to denote the effect of God's judgments. Here it implies the discomfiture of all His enemies.

7. *The LORD... Jacob*] The confidence of the Psalmist rests on two principles, the universality of God's dominion, indicated by the title "the LORD of Hosts," and His covenanted relation to the Hebrews as "the God of Jacob."

is with us] Thus the prophet Jahaziel promises (2 Chr. xx. 17).

8. These words are suitable to either of the transactions referred to in the introduction; but of the two more specially to the ruin of the invaders in Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Chr. xx. 22, 23). In ²this Psalm there is no notice of the annihilation of a vast army by a sudden visitation from heaven.

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9. Cp marg. ref. The images in the Prophet are drawn out more fully; hence it may be inferred that in the Psalm we have an earlier production.

10. *Be still*] Or, "cease," i.e. from your anxieties and efforts (cp. Exod. xiv. 13).

XLVII. This appears to have been composed for a national thanksgiving after the deliverance celebrated in the preceding Psalm. The victory had been won without a battle, and is therefore ascribed to the personal intervention of God.

The fifth verse comes between two strophes, each of four verses; the division is marked by Selah.

2. *terrible*] Or, "awful;" the fear is not incompatible with reverent joy.

3. *He shall subdue*] Or, *He subdueth*; the Psalmist realizes the future. On the word see marg. ref. note.

4. *He shall choose*] *He chooseth*: hence the futility of all efforts to dispossess His people. Cp. 2 Chr. xx. 11.

the excellency] i.e. That inheritance in which Jacob exults with grateful joy (cp. Amos vi. 8, vii. 7; Isai. xxxv. 2, lx. 15).

5. God is said "to come down," when He

N

- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises:
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
- 7 ^aFor God is the King of all the earth:
^aSing ye praises ¹with understanding.
- 8 ¹God reigneth over the heathen:
God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
- 9 ²The princes of the people are gathered together,
²*Even* the people of the God of Abraham:
¹For the shields of the earth *belong* unto God:
He is greatly exalted.
- ^a Zech. 14. 9.
^a 1 Cor. 14.
15, 16.
¹ 1 Chr. 16.
31.
Ps. 83. 1.
^a 96. 10.
^a 99. 1.
Rev. 19. 6.
^a Rom. 4. 11,
12.
¹ Ps. 89. 18.

PSALM XLVIII.

A Song and Psalm ²for the sons of Korah.

- 1 GREAT *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised
^aIn the city of our God, *in* the ^bmountain of his holiness.
- 2 ^cBeautiful for situation, ^dthe joy of the whole earth,
^eIs mount Zion, ^eon the sides of the north,
^fThe city of the great King.
- 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- 4 For, lo, ^gthe kings were assembled,—they passed by together.
- ^a Ps. 46. 4.
^a 87. 3.
^b Mic. 4. 1.
^c Zech. 8. 3.
^c Ps. 50. 2.
Lam. 2. 15.
Dan. 8. 9.
^d Ezek. 20. 6.
^e Isai. 14. 13.
^f Matt. 5. 35.
^g 2 Sam. 10.
6—19.
- ¹ Or, every one that hath understanding. ² Or, The voluntary of the people are gathered unto ³ the people of the God of Abraham. ⁴ Or, of.

interposes for the deliverance of His people; and "to go up," to return to His heavenly throne, when that work is accomplished. All these expressions have their special and literal fulfilment in the Son (cp. Eph. iv. 8—10).

with a shout] Amidst the jubilant shouts of His rescued people.

trumpet] See 2 Chr. xx. 28. There may also be a reference to the solemn procession when the Ark was brought to Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 15).

7. *King of all the earth*] Cp. marg. ref., where the same expression is used with reference to the manifestation of the Lord on the day of judgment.

sing ye praises with understanding] The Hebrew expression is technical; "play on the harp a hymn of instruction," marking the special intention of the Psalm, which is to inculcate practical and spiritual lessons.

9. *The princes*] Better than in the marg. The word properly means "noble," "generous" in character; but it is used of princes, with reference to the qualities which become them (cp. Judg. v. 9).

even the people] i.e. "Princes of peoples (foreign or heathen nations) are assembled, as a people of the God of Abraham." All princes of high and generous character, all noble spirits, will be converted and form one nation, acknowledging the God of Abraham, becoming thus "a chosen generation," "a royal priesthood" (Exod. xix. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9).

the shields] i.e. The defenders, or rulers (Hosea, iv. 18 marg.).

This Psalm is an instance of the combination of lyrical and prophetic elements:

while celebrating a transaction of immediate interest to God's people, the Psalmist uses expressions throughout which have their adequate fulfilment in the Person and work of the Messiah.

XLVIII. This Psalm belongs to the same series as the two preceding; and in structure resembles Ps. xlvii. In the first the overthrow of the enemy is the prominent thought, and in the second the triumph of God's glory; in this the Psalmist turns his thoughts to the beauty, security, and splendour of the city of God.

The Levites sang this Psalm at the morning sacrifice on the second day of the week.

1. *mountain of his holiness*] His holy mountain; cp. ii. 6, lxxxvii. 1; Isai. ii. 3.

2. *for situation*] Lit. "for elevation," or "in height." The word seems to denote a graceful wavelike height: not rugged and precipitous, but rising by a succession of beautiful terraces.

on the sides of the north] i.e. To the north of Zion is situate the city of which God is in a special sense the King, as dwelling there in the Temple, His Palace (cp. Matt. v. 35). The beauty and glory of Zion, the residence of Judah's earthly sovereigns, is great, but surpassed by the city built around the Palace of its heavenly King.

3. *God is known*] i.e. He hath manifested Himself as the Protector of Zion, dwelling in her palaces (cp. xlv. 5).

4. *the kings were assembled*] This clearly refers to an invasion of Judah by confederated kings, who were discomfited without a battle; see Ps. xlv. introduction.

they passed by] The princes advanced,

- 5 They saw *it*, and so they marvelled;
They were troubled, and hasted away.
6 Fear ^atook hold upon them there,
^aAnd pain, as of a woman in travail.
7 Thou ^bbreakest the ships of Tarshish ^cwith an east wind.
8 As we have heard, so have we seen
In ^mthe city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God:
God will ⁿestablish it for ever. Selah.
9 We have thought of ^othy lovingkindness, O God,
In the midst of thy temple.
10 According to ^pthy name, O God,
So *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth:
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
11 Let mount Zion rejoice,—let the daughters of Judah be glad
Because of thy judgments.
12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her:
Tell the towers thereof.
13 ¹Mark ye well her bulwarks,—²consider her palaces;
That ye may tell *it* to the generation following.
14 For this God *is* our God for ever and ever:
He will ^qbe our guide *even* unto death.

^a Ex. 15. 15.
ⁱ Hos. 13. 13.
^k Ezek. 27.
26.
^l Jer. 18. 17.
^m ver. 1, 2.
ⁿ Isai. 2. 2.
^o Mic. 4. 1.
^p Ps. 26. 3.
& 40. 10.
^r Deut. 28.
58.
Josh. 7. 9.
Ps. 113. 3.
Mal. 1. 11.

^q Isai. 53. 11.

PSALM XLIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm ³for the sons of Korah.

- 1 HEAR this, all *ye* people;
Give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world:

¹ Heb. *Set your heart to her bulwarks.*

² Or, *raise up.*

³ Or, *of.*

they saw the glorious city, they marvelled, were troubled, and fled in terror and confusion. The invaders were encamped at Tekoa (2 Chr. xx. 20), whence they had a view of Jerusalem.

7. *The ships of Tarshish*] Ships of a particular class. The Psalmist may possibly allude to the destruction of the combined fleet of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah at Ezion-Geber (see 1 K. xxii. 48, 49 notes). If so, the words here are either a well-timed warning, such as was given to Jehoshaphat by Eliezer, or a seasonable reminiscence in the midst of a national exultation.

8. *God will establish it for ever*] A prophecy which is truly and adequately accomplished in the perpetuity of the Church, of which Jerusalem was a type (marg. ref.; see also Rev. xxi. 2, 10).

9. *We have thought &c.*] Lit. "We have imaged," i.e. bodied it forth, or, vividly realized. Cp. the history in 2 Chr. xx. 5-19.

10. *According to thy name*] i.e. Wherever God's name is known, and its significance manifested by such deeds of might and goodness, His praise will be declared.

11. *the daughters of Judah*] Either the cities of Judah, or the maidens and women of Judah, who always took a prominent part in national acts of thanksgiving (see lxxviii. 25; Ex. xv. 20).

12, 13. An address to the Israelites which agrees remarkably with the account of the

triumphant entry of Jehoshaphat into Jerusalem (2 Chr. xx. 27, 28). The people are invited to observe the strength and grandeur of the city, and thus to realize the extent and completeness of their deliverance.

13. *consider*] The Hebrew word occurs in no other passage. It probably means, "observe one by one:" each noble building will suggest fresh motives for grateful joy. Cp. Isai. xxxiii. 18.

14. *unto death*] Heb. Al-muth, the words rest on insufficient authority; the Psalm ends probably with the word "guide." Critics take Al-muth to be a musical term, denoting the tune, and coming at the end of the Psalm (as in Hab. iii. 19) instead of the beginning, as elsewhere throughout this book; or it may be misplaced, belonging to the next Psalm. [Al-muth differs in vowels only from Alamoth in the inscription to Ps. xvi.; possibly the latter word is the right reading here].

XLIX. This Psalm contains the most perfect development of Hebrew thought on the deepest problem of existence. It affirms clearly the doctrine of a future state of compensation, and establishes it on the strongest grounds. It is altogether didactic, resembling in style and rhythm the book of Proverbs; its sentences are brief, compact, and highly poetic, adapted for solemn recitation with lyric accompaniment.

- ^a Ps. 63. 9. 2 Both ^alow and high,—rich and poor, together.
^b Ps. 78. 2. 3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom;
 Matt. 13. 35. 4 And the meditation of my heart *shall* be of understanding.
 4 ^bI will incline mine ear to a parable:
 I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
 5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,
 When ^cthe iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?
^c Ps. 38. 4. 6 They that ^dtrust in their wealth,
^d Job 31. 24. And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
 Ps. 53. 7. 7 None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother;
 & 62. 10. Nor ^egive to God a ransom for him:
 Mark 10. 24. 8 (For ^fthe redemption of their soul is precious,
 1 Tim. 6. 17. And it ceaseth for ever:)
^e Matt. 18. 9 That he should still live for ever,—and ^gnot see corruption.
 26. 10 For he seeth *that* ^hwise men die,
^f Job 38. 18. Likewise the fool and the brutish person perish,
^g Ps. 89. 48. ⁱAnd leave their wealth to others.
^h Eccles. 2. 16.
ⁱ Prov. 11. 4. 18, 21.
 Eccles. 2. 18, 21.

The date of the Psalm is uncertain, but, judging from style, colouring, and tone of thought, it belongs to the latter portion of the grand gnomic age of Hebrew poetry, which began with David, attained its development under Solomon, and lasted, with intervals of obscurity and brightness, to the great development of prophecy under Hezekiah. It resembles those Psalms which are attributed to Asaph, or bear the names of the sons of Korah, but are unconnected with historical events. There is a strong resemblance between it and the Book of Job; but the problem there proposed is here solved (*v.* 15). See *Intro.* p. 100.

The structure is clearly marked: *vv.* 1-4, introductory strophe; the refrain (*vv.* 12-20) closes two strophes each of eight verses, but somewhat irregular in arrangement.

1. *all ye people*] Or, *peoples*: the Psalm is addressed to all nations, it deals with universal truths: a term specially characteristic of the Solomonian period, or what is sometimes called the school of Hebrew wisdom.

world] The word in the original denotes transitoriness; the world of time and sense (*cp.* *xvii.* 14).

2. *low and high*] Lit. "sons of Adam, and sons of *ish*." Adam corresponds to homo, ἀνθρωπος, and *ish* to vir, ἀνρ. The A.V. expresses the real meaning.

4. *parable*] Or, "proverb;" the Hebrew word comprehends all instructions, sayings, proverbs, allegories, or parables.

dark saying] Figurative words conveying a hidden, mysterious meaning (in *Ezek.* *xvii.* 2, A.V. "riddle"). The Psalmist opens them as a merchant opens a casket of jewels, not exactly explaining them, but bringing them into notice: they are truths which, though dark, need only to be stated to command attention and convey instruction.

upon the harp] Or, *with the harp*, *i.e.* with a musical accompaniment. This marks

the character of the poem to be lyrical or didactic: not like the preceding hymns, to be sung by choirs of Levites, but solemnly recited by one teacher.

5. This is the subject-matter of the dark saying, or enigma.

when the iniquity of my heels] The meaning is disputed. If "my heels" be equivalent to "my steps," *i.e.* "of my false steps," errors or sins, the Psalmist would attribute his misfortunes to his own misconduct; but most commentators consider such a view to be out of place here: hence they take the word "heels" to be equivalent to "supplanters," treacherous enemies ever on the watch to trip up a man's heels. *Cp.* the name Jacob, and *Josh.* *viii.* 13.

7. The point is in the word "brother." No man can redeem (*i.e.* save from the great enemy "death") one who is but a sharer of the same nature. It has been observed truly that a man might only redeem his brother from temporal servitude (*Lev.* *xxv.* 48).

give to God a ransom for him] Death is but the gaoler or the prison; the ransom must be one which God accepts, and God is the only Redeemer.

8. *the redemption...precious*] So costly that it cannot be achieved (see *marg. ref.*).

and it ceaseth] Or, "and he gives it up," *i.e.* abandons the attempt; no mediation will avail, or be thought of, hereafter.

9. The connexion of this verse with the preceding may be expressed by a paraphrase; the rich man must abandon all hope that any ransom can be found which will deliver him for ever from the grave.

not see corruption] See *xvi.* 10 note.

10. This verse is a continuation from *v.* 7. The observation of universal mortality leaves no place for the hope alluded to in *v.* 9 note: but this argument would be pointless had not the just man a different and unfailing hope after death.

- 11 Their inward thought *is, that* their houses shall continue for ever,
And their dwelling places ¹to all generations:
They ²call *their* lands after their own names.
- 12 Nevertheless ¹man *being* in honour abideth not:
He is like the beasts *that* perish.
- 13 This their way *is* their ³folly:
Yet their posterity ²approve their sayings. Selah.
- 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave;
Death shall feed on them;
And ⁴the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;
⁵And their ³beauty shall consume ⁴in the grave from their dwelling.
- 15 But God ⁶will redeem my soul ⁵from the power of ⁶the grave:
For he shall receive me. Selah.
- 16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich,
When the glory of his house is increased;
- 17 ⁷For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away:
His glory shall not descend after him.
- 18 Though ⁷while he lived ⁸he blessed his soul:
And *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.
- 19 ⁸He shall ⁹go to the generation of his fathers;
They shall never see ⁹light.
- ¹ Heb. to ⁹generation and generation.
² Heb. delight in their mouth.
³ Or, strength.
⁴ Or, the grave being an habitation to every one of them.
⁵ Heb. from the hand of the grave.
⁶ Or, hell.
⁷ Heb. in his life.
⁸ Heb. The soul shall go.

² Gen. 4. 17.¹ ver. 20.

Ps. 39. 5.

& 82. 7.

³ Luke 12.

20.

⁴ Ps. 47. 3.

Dan. 7. 22.

1 Cor. 6. 2.

Rev. 2. 26.

& 20. 4.

⁵ Job 4. 21.

Ps. 39. 11.

⁶ Ps. 56. 13.

Hos. 13. 14.

⁷ Job 27. 19.⁸ Deut. 29.

19.

Luke 12. 19.

⁹ Gen. 15. 15.⁶ Job 33. 30.

Ps. 56. 13.

11. Their whole inner man is filled with one thought: they know they must die, but then their houses will stand &c. The Psalmist does not deny this; he reverts to the one universal fact stated in v. 12.

12. *abideth not*] Lit. "passeth not the night;" i.e. he will by no means repose in honour; the sleep of death will be mere corruption.

13. The verse probably means, "This is the way of men who are self-confident, and of those after them who approve their sayings."

14. As sheep lie down in the fold at night, so man lies down in the grave: death shall feed them, be their shepherd (not "feed on them"); but in the morning, which follows the night of death, comes an awakening, and then the righteous will reign over the wicked.

And their beauty . . . grave] Lit. "And their form is for the destruction of Hell," or Sheol: i.e. their form with its beauty and grandeur will fall into utter dissolution in Sheol, the state of which the grave is the entrance.

from their dwelling] i.e. So that no one of them will have any dwelling: a bitter irony of their hope that their houses will endure for ever.

Others render the clause, "and their form withers, Sheol is their dwelling-place."

15. Contrast with all this the hope of the

righteous. God will redeem him from the hand of Sheol; death has put forth his hand and seized him, but is forced to surrender his captive, for God takes him to Himself (cp. Gen. v. 24). This is not stated as a revealed doctrine, but as a presentiment, a deep inward conviction inseparable from real living faith in a living God.

16. The answer to the question of v. 5; all ground for misgiving is removed when the future state of the man of the world is considered.

18. *while he lived*] Lit. as in marg., that life which to him was all in all, to which his hopes and joys were confined.

he blessed his soul] i.e. He congratulated himself on his prosperity, and indulged all his appetites (cp. marg. refl.).

and men will praise thee] A fine point in the sarcasm: the rich man's neighbours admire his luxury, his self-indulgence, and repeat his axioms. Of all trials none is greater than to see the "honour, reverence, and troops of friends" which surround the rich man, as such, to the very end.

when thou doest well to thyself] i.e. Livest in good cheer (cp. Eccl. xi. 9).

19. *He shall go*] Or, *She*, i.e. the soul (which he thought so happy) shall go to the place where his fathers await him.

never] Or, *they*, he and his fathers, all who live like him and die like him, shall not see light for evermore. There is ⁹the

- * ver. 12. 20 "Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not,
 * Eccles. 3. 19. "Is like the beasts *that* perish.

PSALM L.

A Psalm ¹ of Asaph.

- * Neh. 9. 32. 1 THE "mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken,
 Isai. 9. 6. And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going
 Jer. 32. 18. down thereof.
 * Ps. 48. 2. 2 Out of Zion, ^bthe perfection of beauty,—^cGod hath shined.
 * Deut. 33. 2. 3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence :
 Ps. 80. 1. ^dA fire shall devour before him,
 * Lev. 10. 2. And it shall be very tempestuous round about him.
 Num. 16. 35. 4 ^eHe shall call to the heavens from above,
 Dan. 7. 10. And to the earth, that he may judge his people.
 * Deut. 4. 23. & 32. 1. 5 Gather ^fmy saints together unto me ;
 Isai. J. 2. ^gThose that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.
 Mic. 6. 1, 2. 6 And ^hthe heavens shall declare his righteousness :
 * Deut. 33. 3. For ⁱGod *is* judge himself. Selah.
 Leui. 13. 3. 7 ^kHear, O my people, and I will speak ;
 * Ex. 24. 7. O Israel, and I will testify against thee :
 * Ps. 97. 6. ^lI *am* God, *even* thy God.
 * Ps. 75. 7. 8 ^mI will not reprove thee ⁿfor thy sacrifices
 * Ps. 81. 8. Or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.
 * Ex. 20. 2.
 * Isai. 1. 11.
 Jer. 7. 22.
 * Hos. 6. 6.

¹ Or, *for Asaph*. See 1 Chr. 15. 17. & 25. 2. ² Chr. 29. 30.

one point of difference hereafter; the blackness of Sheol will be their portion eternally; but the just will see light in God's light (see xxxvi. 9).

20. They who live in honour without reflecting (who do not "so number their days as to apply their hearts unto wisdom") resemble the beasts that perish; dying without hope of an hereafter.

L. This is the first of the Psalms attributed to Asaph, and the only one in this book: the chief group of Asaphic Psalms being in the third book (lxxiii. to lxxxiii.). Asaph was the leader and superintendent of the Levitic choirs appointed by David (1 Chr. xvi. 4, 5). He and his sons presided over four out of the twenty-four groups, each consisting of twelve Levites, who conducted in turn the musical services of the Temple. Some Psalms which bear his name may possibly have been composed by his descendants, but this grand ode bears all the marks of the golden age of Hebrew poetry. The characteristics of the Asaphic Psalms are exceeding solemnity, a lofty judicial tone, with awful warnings and admonitions. The name Jehovah is occasionally used, but, as in the Korahitish Psalms, Elohim more frequently.

The central thought of this Psalm is the inefficacy of outward sacrifices compared with the offerings of the heart and purity of life: a principle distinctly recognized in the Davidic Psalms and by all the Prophets. The circumstance that it is the composition of a chief among the Levites, whose whole life was devoted to the Temple-service, is specially important, shewing how unfounded

is the notion of a spirit of opposition or rivalry between the prophetic and priestly orders in the best days of Israel.

The introduction occupies vv. 1-6; then one ejaculatory verse (7) is followed by two strophes (8-15, 16-23).

1. Three names of the Deity are given, El, Elohim, Jehovah: partly to mark the solemnity of the occasion, partly to indicate the universality of the judgment; God in His might: God in the manifold attributes, or manifestation, of His Being: God as revealed specially to His people by the Covenant name, Jehovah.

2. *the perfection of beauty*] An epithet of Mount Zion (marg. ref.); though "beauty" is often attributed to the Messiah (xlv. 2), it applies rather to the human manifestation than to the divine essence of the Deity.

shined] The Hebrew word is specially used of Theophanies, i.e. visible manifestations of God's Presence, not of His Person.

3. *not keep silence*] Loud thunders, the voice of God, accompany the Theophany.

5. *my saints*] Lit., "my pious ones;" here a general designation of Israelites, as a holy people in virtue of their covenant relation to God, which is attested by sacrifices. It was the name assumed in the Maccabean period by the strict party afterwards called Pharisees.

that have made, &c.] Or, *who ratify my covenant with sacrifice* (marg. ref.).

6. *And the heavens, &c.*] i.e. They announce His coming to judge the world, and vindicate the course of righteousness.

8. *continually*] The Hebrew word is spe-

- 9 °I will take no bullock out of thy house,
Nor he goats out of thy folds.
- 10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
- 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains:
And the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.
- 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:
°For the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.
- 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, — or drink the blood of goats?
- 14 °Offer unto God thanksgiving;
And °pay thy vows unto the most High:
- 15 And °call upon me in the day of trouble:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt °glorify me.
- 16 But unto the wicked God saith,
What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,
Or *that* thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?
- 17 °Seeing thou hatest instruction,
And °castest my words behind thee.
- 18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou °consentedst with him,
And °hast been °partaker with adulterers.
- 19 °Thou givest thy mouth to evil,
And °thy tongue frameth deceit.
- 20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother;
Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
- 21 These *things* hast thou done, °and I kept silence;
°Thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself:
But °I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine
- 22 Now consider this, ye that °forget God,
Lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.
- 23 °Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me:
And °to him °that ordereth *his* conversation *aright*
Will I shew the salvation of God.

° Mic. 6. 6.
Acts 17. 25.

° Ex. 19. 5.
Job 41. 11.
Ps. 24. 1.
1 Cor. 10.
26, 28.
° Hos. 14. 2.
Heb. 13. 15.
° Deut. 23.
21.
Job 22. 27.
Eccles. 5.
4, 5.
° Job 22. 27.
Ps. 91. 15.
Zech. 13. 9.
° ver. 23.
Ps. 22. 23.
° Rom. 2.
21, 22.
° Neh. 9. 26.
° Rom. 1. 32.
° 1 Tim. 5.
22.
° Ps. 52. 2.

° Eccles. 8.
11, 12.
Isai. 26. 10.
° 57. 11.
° See Rom.
2. 4.
° Ps. 90. 8.
° Job 8. 13.
Ps. 9. 17.
Isai. 51. 13.
° Ps. 27. 6.
Rom. 12. 1.
° Gal. 6. 16.

1 Heb. *with me.*

adulterers.

° Heb. *that disposeth his way.*

2 Heb. *thy portion was with*

° Heb. *Thou sendest.*

cially used of the daily sacrifices offered in the Sanctuary. No fault is imputed to the people for the regular observance of the ceremonial Law.

14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving*] Lit., "sacrifice thanksgiving:" i.e. instead of the legal "sacrifice of peace offerings for a thanksgiving or a vow" (Lev. vii. 11-16), the true worshipper must offer that which the victim represents—viz., praise from a grateful heart. This does not imply that the outer forms are to be omitted, but that they are valueless, except as the expression of genuine devotion and obedience to God's will.

16. *the wicked*] Wilful transgressors, who still claim the privileges of God's people.

17. *hatest...castest*] The first mark of utter wickedness is inward alienation; the second open rejection of the moral Law.

18. *thou consentedst*] Or, "hadst pleasure;" a higher degree in guilt than even the commission of sin (see marg. ref.).

hast been partaker] Rather, and with adulterers is thy portion. Thou sharest their condition, their feelings, and their fate.

19. *Thou givest*] Lit., as in marg., i.e. lettest it loose, givest it free play.

20. *thou slanderest*] "thou utterest scandal against:" that which causes a man to fall, overthrows his projects or character.

21. Because God kept silence, and did not at once openly punish the sin, the transgressor held Him to be wholly indifferent or even disposed to favour the sinner (cp. Job xxi. 14).

23. *that ordereth &c.*] Lit. as in the marg., i.e. ordereth his way of life by the rule of duty.

PSALM LI.

* 2Sam. 12. 1.

& 11. 2, 4.

* ver. 9.

Isai. 43. 25.

& 44. 22.

Col. 2. 14.

b Heb. 9. 14.

1 John 1. 7, 9.

Rev. 1. 5.

* Ps. 32. 5.

* ver. 12.

d Gen. 20. 6.

& 39. 9.

Lev. 5. 19.

& 6. 2.

2Sam. 12. 13.

* Luke 15. 21.

/ Rom. 3. 4.

s Job 14. 4.

Ps. 68. 3.

John 3. 6.

Rom. 5. 12.

Eph. 2. 3.

a Job 14. 4.

c Job 38. 36.

d Lev. 14. 4.

6. 40.

Num. 19. 18.

Heb. 9. 19.

f Isai. 1. 18.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, * when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

1 HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:

According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions:

And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,

And done this evil in thy sight:

That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,

And be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;

And in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:

And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

¹ Heb. warm me.

LI. This begins a series of fifteen Psalms, which are attributed in the inscriptions to David. They are remarkable for the prevalent, though not exclusive, use of the divine name Elohim instead of Jehovah. In this Psalm the fact may possibly be accounted for by David's feeling that his great sin had endangered, if not suspended for a season, the privileges assured to God's people by the Covenant name: he might not plead that before his entire restoration to God's favour. The inscription to the Psalm gives the occasion on which it was written. This is confirmed by the strongest internal evidence: the depth of penitence, and the fervour of devotion, are specially characteristic of David. The Psalm consists of four parts: vv. 1-4, 5-12, 13-17, and 18-19.

This Psalm has been adopted by the Church in all ages as that which expresses best and most fully the true spirit of penitence. Our Church uses it on Ash Wednesday.

1. *mercy, lovingkindness*] The first word is strong; it implies kindness, graciousness; but the second is much stronger; it speaks of deep, tender, parental sympathy.

blot out] The word implies total erasure, as of a writing from a tablet. David first prays for justification in its primary sense of deliverance from the imputation of guilt.

transgressions] Plural. David's great sin did not stand alone; adultery was followed by treachery and murder. He uses three distinct words for his guilt—transgressions, iniquity, and sin, involving every kind and degree of guilt (see xxxii. 1 note).

2. *Wash me thoroughly*] This is more than justification. The washing takes out the

impurity, the soul is cleansed by it. The original implies reiterated washing.

cleanse] The word used in Lev. xiii. 6-24.

3. *For*] David pleads no excuse, no palliation, only unreserved confession: but that one word "for" involves a sure hope. God will not reject a prayer offered in such a spirit (see 1 John i. 9).

4. *thee only*] The word "only" is striking, considering how David had cruelly injured his fellow-men, and the terrible results of his guilt: but sin, as such, is directed primarily against God. Whatever guilt David might have contracted towards man, in the mind of a true Israelite it was absolutely nothing compared with his sin against God. Hence David confesses his guilt unreservedly, in order that he may admit the justice of whatever sentence God may pronounce. "Justified" is taken in the true sense of being just in fact and appearance, of being, and of being acknowledged to be, righteous.

5. From the special confession of sin David passes to the acknowledgment of inherent and inherited sinfulness, which he puts forward as the origin of his actual sin. His mother was a sinner when she conceived him. David does not regard the act of conception as sinful in itself, but accidentally, as the act of a sinful nature.

6. *inward parts*] i.e. The innermost consciousness.

7. *with hyssop*] See marg. reff. David regarded his sinfulness as a moral leprosy, for which the cure was symbolized by the blood sprinkled with the hyssop.

whiter than snow] See marg. reff. This Psalm is full of passages bearing the closest resemblance to Isaiah; the prophet's mind

- 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness;
That the bones which thou hast broken *may rejoice. ^m Matt. 5. 4.
- 9 *Hide thy face from my sins,
 And blot out all mine iniquities. ⁿ Jer. 16, 17.
- 10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God;
 And renew ¹a right spirit within me. ^o ver. 1.
- 11 Cast me not away ²from thy presence;
 And take not thy *holy spirit from me. ^p Acts 15. 9.
- 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
 And uphold me *with thy* ³free spirit. Eph. 2. 10.
- 13 Then will I ⁴teach transgressors thy ways;
 And sinners shall be converted unto thee. ^q Gen. 4. 14-2
- 14 Deliver me from ²bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my Kin. 13. 23.
- salvation : ^r Rom. 8. 9.
- And *my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. Eph. 4. 30.
- 15 O Lord, open thou my lips;
 And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. ^s 2 Cor. 3. 17.
- 16 For ²thou desirest not sacrifice; ³else would I give it : ^t 2 Sam. 11.
- Thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17.
- 17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : & 12. 9.
- A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. ^u Ps. 35. 23.
- 18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion : ^v Num. 15.
- Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. 27. 30.
- Ps. 40. 6.
- & 50. 8.
- Isai. 1. 11.
- Jer. 7. 22.
- Hos. 6. 6.
- v Ps. 34. 13.
- Isai. 57. 15.
- & 66. 2.

¹ Or, a constant spirit.² Heb. bloods.³ Or, that I should give it.

was impregnated with the truths which nowhere find a fuller and more touching expression than in this Psalm.

10. *clean heart*] i.e. Free from the taint and consciousness of sin. Cp. 1 Sam. x. 9.

renew a right spirit] a steadfast spirit, one not disquieted by fears or doubts, a mind stayed on the Lord, and therefore kept in perfect peace (Isai. xxvi. 3).

11. *thy holy spirit*] The Spirit whereby David was consecrated to his kingly office, and endued with the gifts and graces requisite for discharging its duties (see 1 Sam. xvi. 13). The Psalmist may have remembered that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and have felt that he had incurred the danger of a similar abandonment.

12. *the joy of thy salvation*] The holy joy inseparable from the realization of God's saving grace.

free spirit] The word rendered "free" means willing, generous, spontaneously seeking and urging to goodness (cp. liv. 6).

13. *Then will I teach*] Or, I would fain teach transgressors Thy ways, those who, like me, have committed heinous sins. Such a desire is one of the surest signs of spiritual repentance.

be converted] Or, "return;" David speaks not of conversion from unbelief, but of restoration to a state of grace.

14. *bloodguiltiness*] See marg.: the plural is exclusively used to denote bloodshed or murder (Gen. iv. 10). The blood of Uriah cried for vengeance like that of Abel.

David might well pray to be saved from the blood calling for vengeance.

15. *O Lord*] Not Jehovah, but Adonai, Master.

open thou] Or, *Thou wilt open*; his lips have been closed by guilt; when the conscience is freed, prayers and thanksgivings will flow freely and copiously.

16. Personal guilt cannot be cleansed by sacrifice. God has no pleasure in sacrifices offered in place of inward contrition.

17. *The sacrifices of God*] i.e. Those sacrifices which God really approves. His fatherly chastisement breaks the spirit, which He then pities and accepts. This verse, l. 14, and 1 Sam. xv. 22, taken together, complete the true principles of sacrificial offerings, which represent obedience, gratitude, and repentance.

18, 19. These verses are supposed by some to have been added during, or immediately after, the Babylonian Captivity; but the connexion of thought appears sufficiently clear and satisfactory. David has just declared that he puts no trust in sacrifices offered for the expiation of his personal guilt; but as a king he feels differently: he can promise abundant sacrifices if in His goodness God will complete (i.e. enable him to complete) the building of the walls of Jerusalem. The walls were in progress, probably approaching their completion, just about the time of David's fall: and the king might well feel that his crime might bring with it a punishment which would be detrimental to his people. The Psalmist does not speak of rebuilding, but of building;

- * Ps. 4. 5. 19 Then shalt thou be pleased with *the sacrifices of righteousness,
Mal. 3. 3. with burnt offering and whole burnt offering :
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

PSALM LII.

- * 1 Sam. To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, * when Doeg the Edomite came
22. 9. and * told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.
21. 7. 1 WHY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O "mighty man ?
The goodness of God *endureth* continually.
* Ps. 50. 19. 2 ^bThy tongue deviseth mischiefs ;
* Ps. 57. 4. ^cLike a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
& 59. 7. 3 Thou lovest evil more than good ;
& 64. 3. And ^dlying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.
* Jer. 9. 4, 5. 4 Thou lovest all devouring words,
¹O thou deceitful tongue.
5 God shall likewise ²destroy thee for ever,
He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling place,
And *root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.
* Prov. 2. 22. 6 ^eThe righteous also shall see, and fear,
* Job 22. 19. ^fAnd shall laugh at him :
Ps. 40. 3. 7 Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength ;
& 64. 9. But ^htrusted in the abundance of his riches,
Mal. 1. 5. And strengthened himself in his ³wickedness.
* Ps. 58. 10. 8 But I *am* ⁱlike a green olive tree in the house of God :
* Ps. 49. 6. I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
* Jer. 11. 16. 9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it* :
Hos. 14. 6. And I will wait on thy name ; ^kfor *it is* good before thy saints.

¹ Or, and the deceitful tongue.² Heb. beat thee down.³ Or, substance.

he makes no mention of the Temple, which would have been the first consideration with any devout Israelite after the Captivity.

LII. The inscription to this Psalm accounts for the bitterness of the writer's spirit.

The first verse is introductory, then follow five strophes (two verses each), the close of the first and the second being marked by Selah.

1. *O mighty man*] Doeg was the chief of Saul's herdsmen. He was at Nob (marg. ref.), undergoing a process of purification, not improbably necessitated by some previous crime.

2. *mischiefs*] Or, **malignity**. The word has the sense of ruinous, unfathomable evil, destructive malignity.

working deceitfully] As a razor cuts suddenly and without warning, so Doeg, leaving Nob without intimation of hostile purposes, caused the sudden destruction of David's friends.

3. The Psalmist attributes the crime not to any temptation from without, but to an inward and deliberate love of evil instead of good.

4. *devouring words*] Words that destroy, cause sudden and utter ruin (cp. xxxv. 25).

5. *likewise*] As Doeg had done to David's friends, so should be done to him, not for a time, not for once, but for ever.

out of thy dwelling place] Lit. "from the tent." This also (see v. 1 note) points to a herdsman.

6. *shall laugh*] The exultation of the righteous at the just punishment of the wicked is utterly distinct from the indulgence of personal feelings of revenge or animosity.

7. The root of the evil began with alienation from God, was promoted by love of riches, such as Saul would heap on his adherent, and attained its full development in a heart strong only in its longings for evil.

wickedness] **Malignity**. The same word which in v. 2 is rendered "mischiefs."

8, 9. Each trait of the description of the true servant of God is suggested by the contrast between him and the wicked. They make not God their strength, the Psalmist lives and prospers in God's house: they trust in riches, he in God's mercy: they are wholly given up to evil lusts, he waits only on God's name.

8. *green olive tree*] The Tabernacle at Nob was probably situate on the northern summit of the Mount of Olives; and olives may naturally have formed a grove within its precincts.

9. *thou hast done it*] Omit "it." The expression (cp. xxii. 31) declares the Psalmist's absolute confidence in the accomplishment of the will of God

PSALM LIII.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, *A Psalm of David.*

- 1 THE "fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*
Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity :
^b There is none that doeth good. ^a Ps. 10. 4.
& 14. 1, &c.
^b Rom. 3. 10.
- 2 God "looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there were *any* that did understand, that did *^d seek* ^c God. ^c Ps. 33. 13.
^d 2 Chr. 15. 2.
& 19. 3.
- 3 Every one of them is gone back :
They are altogether become filthy ;
There is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- 4 Have the workers of iniquity "no knowledge ?
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread :
They have not called upon God. ^e Jer. 4. 22.
- 5 *^f There* ¹ were they in great fear, *where* no fear was :
For God hath *^g scattered* the bones of him that encampeth ^h *against* thee :
Thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them. ^f Lev. 26. 17,
36.
Prov. 28. 1.
^g Ezek. 6. 5.
- 6 ^h *Oh* that the salvation of Israel *were* come out of Zion !
When God bringeth back the captivity of his people.
Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad. ^h Ps. 14. 7.

PSALM LIV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm of David, * when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us ?*

- 1 SAVE me, O God, by thy name,
And judge me by thy strength.
 - 2 Hear my prayer, O God ;—give ear to the words of my mouth.
 - 3 For "strangers are risen up against me,
And oppressors seek after my soul :
They have not set God before them. Selah. ^a Ps. 86. 14.
 - 4 Behold, God *is* mine helper :
^b The Lord is with them that uphold my soul. ^b Ps. 118. 7.
 - 5 He shall reward evil unto ³ mine enemies :
- ¹ Heb. *they feared a fear,* ² Heb. *Who will give salutations, &c.* ³ Heb. *those that observe me,* Ps. 5. 8.

and I will wait &c.] Or, and I will wait for Thy name, for it is good, in the presence of Thy saints. David will wait patiently for the manifestation of goodness, involved in the very name of God, among His faithful and favoured people.

LIII. This Psalm is nearly identical with the xivth. The one is a recension of the other with some slight alterations, for which it is not easy to give a satisfactory account. See notes on Psalm xiv. and introd. to Psalm xlii.

Mahalath] Lit. "Sickness;" the word may indicate a melancholy tune, adapted to the sombre strain of thought which pervades the Psalm.

5. This verse appears to have been added by a later Psalmist, probably in the time of Jehoshaphat or of Hezekiah, when Jerusalem was saved from imminent ruin by the sudden and miraculous destruction of invading armies.

LIV. A Psalm composed in the imminent danger alluded to in the inscription.

The division is marked by Selah (r. 3).

1. *by thy name]* i.e. By the manifestation of the attributes which the name of God signifies, viz. His goodness, power, and truth. *strength]* Or, "might," that of the "hero," an appellation of the God of hosts (xlv. 3 note).

3. *strangers]* In the sense of cruel and unsympathizing foes. The Ziphites were Jews, strangers not in blood, but in spirit. Or, the allusion may be to certain foreigners in the army of Saul, such as Doeg the Edomite, and the Cushite, who were among his bitterest enemies.

4. *with them]* i.e. "among them," "of them;" a not uncommon idiom. He is the one true upholder, on Whom all others depend.

5. *enemies]* Lit. "watchers," persons who lie in ambush. See marg

- * Ps. 59. 49. Cut them off *in thy truth*.
 6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee:
 * Ps. 52. 9. I will praise thy name, O LORD; *for it is good*.
 7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble:
 * Ps. 59. 10. *And mine eye hath seen his desire* upon mine enemies.
 & 92. 11.

PSALM LV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm of David*.

- 1 GIVE ear to my prayer, O God;
 And hide not thyself from my supplication.
 2 Attend unto me, and hear me:
 * Isai. 38. 14. I *mourn in my complaint*, and make a noise;
 3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of
 the wicked:
 * 2 Sam. 16. ^bFor they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.
 7, 8.
 & 19. 10.
 * Ps. 116. 3. 4 *My heart is sore pained within me*:
 And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
 5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
 And horror hath overwhelmed me.
 6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
 For then would I fly away, and be at rest.
 7 Lo, then would I wander far off,
 And remain in the wilderness. Selah.
 8 I would hasten my escape
 From the windy storm and tempest.
 9 Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues:
 For I have seen *violence and strife* in the city.
 * Jer. 6. 7. 10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof:
 Mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

¹ Heb. *covered me*.

in thy truth] Or, by **Thy truth**; by the manifestation of that faithfulness which is expressed in God's name (v. 1 note).

6. *I will freely sacrifice*] i.e. I will offer a freewill sacrifice, such as a grateful heart willingly offers (cp. Num. xv. 3).

7. *For he hath delivered me*] The strong faith of the Psalmist realizes the deliverance as already accomplished; he has no hesitation therefore in vowing a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

mine eye hath seen his desire &c.] Lit. **mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies**, i.e. with triumph (see xxii. 17 note).

L.V. There is every reason for assigning this beautiful Psalm to the time when the conspiracy of Absalom was proceeding.

The ejaculation (v. 9) marks the division into two parts: the strophes are somewhat irregular, marking vehemence of feeling.

2. *I mourn in my complaint*] Or, "I wander in my moaning," i.e. I am tossed about to and fro in the feverish unrest of anxiety and sorrow.

make a noise] Or, "groan aloud;" the same word as "disquieted" in xlii. 11 and "cry aloud" in v. 17. The word properly denotes disturbance, uproar; here violent emotion or groaning.

3. *oppression*] The word (which occurs only in this passage) implies that the enemy had driven the Psalmist into "a great strait." Every word suits the condition of David just before his flight.

cast iniquity upon me] Lit. "cause evil or guilt to fall on me." Cp. 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. They accused him of deep criminality.

7. Or, **Lo, afar off would I flee, I would lodge in the wilderness**. Cp. Jer. ix. 2. For the fact cp. 2 Sam. xv. 28, xvii. 16.

8. As the dove rushes swiftly to her rocky nest, escaping from the storm, so would David fain flee away from the outburst of furious passions. Cp. 2 Sam. xv. 14.

9. An abrupt transition from complaint to indignation.

divide their tongues] Probably a wish that the tongues, which now combine in execrations against David, may be scattered, and the conspiracy broken up. There is perhaps an allusion to the confusion of tongues at Babel. See also Gen. x. 25, where the same word is used.

violence and strife] The indications of a revolutionary movement, which David had noted, but was evidently unable to suppress.

10. A description of the excited people

- 11 Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof :
Deceit and guile depart not from her streets.
- 12 ¹For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me ; then I could have borne it :
Neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did ²magnify *himself* against me ;
Then I would have hid myself from him ;
- 13 But *it was* thou, ¹a man mine equal,
²My guide, and mine acquaintance.
- 14 ²We took sweet counsel together,
And ³walked unto the house of God in company.
- 15 Let death seize upon them,
And let them ⁴go down quick into ³hell :
For wickedness *is* in their dwellings, and among them.
- 16 As for me, I will call upon God ;
And the LORD shall save me.
- 17 ⁵Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud :
And he shall hear my voice.
- 18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me :
For ¹there were many with me.
- 19 God shall hear, and afflict them, ²even he that abideth of old.
Selah.
- ⁴Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.
- ¹ Heb. *a man according to my rank.* ² Heb. *Who sweetened counsel.* ⁴ Or, *With whom also there be no changes, yet they fear not God.*

² 2 Sam. 15.
12.
& 16. 23.
Ps. 41. 9.
Jer. 9. 4.
³ Ps. 42. 4.
Num. 10. 30.

⁵ Luke 18. 1.
Acts 3. 1.
& 10. 3, 9.
1 Thess. 5. 17.

¹ 2 Chr. 32.
7, 8.
² Dent. 33.
27.

prowling about the walls, fixing on points best adapted for an outbreak, or standing in groups in the streets and open places, and preluding the insurrection by acts of violence.

11. In the utter corruption of the people David saw the true cause of the triumph of his enemies, and at the same time the assurance of their ultimate discomfiture.

streets] "street," i.e. the broad open place near the city gate, where justice was administered (see Job v. 4 note).

12 &c. This description of the leader and originator of the whole movement, is generally taken to apply to Ahithophel.

13. *mine equal*] Lit. "a man according to my estimate of position," but here one who is on terms of such intimate familiarity as to be regarded as an equal: so far as could be the case with a subject. The position of Ahithophel fully bears out this view (see marg. ref.).

14. *in company*] Or, *in the throng*, that is, in the midst of the crowd of worshippers (cp. marg. ref.).

15. An outburst of fury, which the combination of malignity and hypocrisy in Ahithophel alone could justify.

seize upon them] Or, *surprise them* treacherously, in retribution for their own unforeseen treachery.

quick into hell] Though David may not realize hell as a place of endless torture, he does regard it as the last home of the impenitent. To go quick (i.e. alive) into hell, is to perish with full consciousness of a miserable fate (cp. marg. ref.). For the fulfilment of the curse see 2 Sam. xvii. 23; xviii. 14.

16. Another change of tone, now sweet and solemn. The name Jehovah, used for the first time in the Psalm, speaks of inward hope and sure salvation.

17. Possibly an allusion to prayers habitually offered thrice daily (see Dan. vi. 10), but the Psalmist is rather speaking of his unceasing supplication in the time of trial.

18. The word rendered "battle" occurs once only in the Historical Books (2 Sam. xvii. 11), where it is used by Hushai in reference to an attack on the king. But David here refers to former deliverances. God has given him the victory oftentimes when "many were" (fighting) with him, and will not fail him now.

19. The Greek Version renders the first words "God will hear (me) and humble them." The passage is probably imperfect. The meaning of the last clause maybe, "who have hitherto gone on without changes or reverses of fortune" (see Job xxi. 7-16).

- * Acts 12. 1. 20 He hath ^aput forth his hands against such as ^obe at peace with him;
 * Ps. 7. 4. ¹He hath broken his covenant.
- * Ps. 23. 3. 21 ¹The words of his mouth were smother than butter, but war
 & 62. 4. was in his heart;
 * Prov. 6. 3. His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.
 & 12. 18.
- * Ps. 37. 5. 22 ^aCast thy ²burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee:
 Matt. 6. 25. ^rHe shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
 Luke 12. 22. 23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction:
 1 Pet. 5. 7. ^{a3}Bloody and deceitful men ⁴shall not live out half their days;
 * Ps. 37. 24. But I will trust in thee.
 * Ps. 5. 6.
 * Job 15. 32.
 Prov. 10. 27.
 Eccles. 7. 17.

PSALM LVI.

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, ^aMichtam of David, when the
 * Philistines took him in Gath.

- * 1 Sam. 21. 11. 1 BE ^amerciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up;
 * Ps. 57. 1. He fighting daily oppresses me.
- * Ps. 57. 3. 2 ⁶Mine enemies would daily ^bswallow me up:
 For they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.
- * ver. 10, 11. 3 What time I am afraid,—I will trust in thee.
 4 ^cIn God I will praise his word,
 In God I have put my trust;
^dI will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
- * Ps. 118. 6. 5 Every day they wrest my words:
 Isai. 31. 3. All their thoughts are against me for evil.
 Heb. 13. 6.
- * Ps. 59. 3. 6 ^eThey gather themselves together, they hide themselves,
 & 140. 2. They mark my steps, ^fwhen they wait for my soul.
 * Ps. 71. 10. 7 Shall they escape by iniquity?

¹ Heb. he hath profaned.

² Or, gift.

³ Heb. men of bloods and deceit.

⁴ Heb. shall not half their days.

⁵ Or, A golden Psalm of

David. So Ps. 16.

⁶ Heb. Mine observers, Ps. 64. 5.

The Hebrew word denotes properly changes of succession, such as of one garment or season for another; hence, by a natural metaphor, vicissitudes of fortune.

20, 21. David reverts suddenly to the treachery of his friend: that treason came on him without any preparation.

20. broken] Or, as in the marg., evidently with allusion to v. 14.

21. Lit. "the butters of his mouth are smooth;" i.e. his words flow sweet and smooth like cream. Cp. Prov. v. 3, 4.

but war was in his heart] Lit. "but war his heart," i.e. his heart was wholly war, a very forcible idiom, signifying the complete absorption of the heart by hatred.

22. burden] The exact meaning of the word, which occurs nowhere else, is uncertain, but our version expresses the sense with sufficient accuracy. It may mean, as in the margin, "gift," viz. that which is given, appointed to man to bear. See 1 Pet. v. 7.

23. A fixed conviction in the justice of God, rather than a prophetic anticipation of the suicide of Ahithophel, and of the fate of Absalom.

LVI. A Psalm of prayer in a time of great affliction: see marg. ref.

The divisions are clearly marked by the refrain at vv. 4, 10, 11.

The inscription is obscure; Jonath-elem-rechokim means "the dove of silence (i.e. the silent dove) of the far ones," i.e. either of far-off lands, or among aliens. It probably designates the tune to which the composition was recited.

David's seizure in Gath is not related in 1 Sam. xxi. 10: but it rests probably upon an ancient and independent record.

1. man] David uses the Hebrew word, which has always the sense of weakness and fragility (see xlix. 2 note), evidently in antithesis to Elohim. He had applied it to Ahithophel in lv. 13.

2. enemies] Or, watchers, see liv. 5, note. This word suits the position of David at Gath.

O thou most High] Lit. "height." Many take it to mean "in pride," "proudly," "haughtily."

4. In God] i.e. With God's help, by His grace; He will enable me to praise His word.

In *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

8 Thou tellest my wanderings:
Put thou my tears into thy bottle:

^a Are they not in thy book?

^a Mal. 3. 16.

9 When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back:
This I know; for ^a God is for me.

^a Rom. 8. 31.

10 In God will I praise *his* word:
In the LORD will I praise *his* word.

^c ver. 4.

11 In God have I put my trust:
I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Thy vows are upon me, O God:
I will render praises unto thee.

13 For ^a thou hast delivered my soul from death:
Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling,

^b Ps. 116. 8.

That I may walk before God in ^c the light of the living?

^c Job 33. 30.

PSALM LVII.

To the chief Musician, ¹ Al-taschith, Michtam of David, ^a when he fled from Saul in the cave.

^a 1 Sam. 22. 1. & 24. 3.

1 BE ^amerciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me:
For my soul trusteth in thee:

Ps. 142, title.

^b Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge,

^c Ps. 56. 1.

^c Until these calamities be overpast.

^b Ps. 17. 8.

2 I will cry unto God most high;

& 63. 7.

Unto God ^a that performeth *all things* for me.

^c Isai. 26. 20.

3 ^a He shall send from heaven, and save me

^d Ps. 138. 8.

² From the reproach of him that would ^c swallow me up. Selah.

^e Ps. 144. 5, 7.

God ^d shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

^f Ps. 56. 1.

4 My soul is among lions:

^g Ps. 40. 11.

And I lie even among them that are set on fire,

& 43. 3.

Even the sons of men, ^h whose teeth are spears and arrows,

& 61. 7.

And ⁱ their tongue a sharp sword.

^h Prov. 30. 14.

¹ Or, *Destroy not, A golden Psalm.*

² Or, *he reproacheth him that would swallow me up.*

ⁱ Ps. 55. 21.

& 64. 3.

8. *tellest my wanderings*] i.e. God keeps an exact account of David's wanderings, notes every incident of his restless flight.

into thy bottle] As the traveller carefully preserves water, milk, or wine in leather bottles or bladders for a journey, so David trusts that God keeps in memory every tear which he sheds.

12. *Thy vows are upon me*] i.e. Vows offered to God on occasions of deliverance from grief and danger.

13. *light of the living*] See marg. ref.

LVII. The cave alluded to in the inscription was either the cave at Engedi or that at Adullam. The whole Psalm is full of the feelings expressed so powerfully in Ps. lvi., and concludes with a strain of exulting and triumphant confidence; on this account it is selected as one of the Psalms in our services for Easter Sunday.

The Psalm is divided into two parts, distinctly marked by the refrain (vv. 5, 11).

Al-taschith] i.e. *Destroy not*. Three other

Psalms (lviii. lix. lxxv.) have the same title, which well expresses their general purport. In this Psalm the title may be an allusion to David's answer to Abishai, when he would have slain Saul with the spear, "Destroy him not," *Al-taschithehu* (1 Sam. xxvi. 9).

1. *trusteth*] Or, *takes refuge*; the same word is repeated in the next clause.

shadow of thy wings] A beautiful and common figure (see marg. ref., and xxxvi. 7), suggested probably by the exquisite passage Deut. xxxii. 11, and adopted by our Lord. See too Ruth ii. 12.

calamities] The "mischiefs" of lii. 2, where see note.

3. *from the reproach*] The original may be rendered either "He revileth the person who persecutes me," or "He that persecutes me revileth."

4. The meaning would seem to be; David contrasts his actual condition in the cave, where he has found refuge, with the lot which would have been his among the fol-

- ^a ver. 11.
Ps. 108. 5. 5 ^b Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let thy glory be above all the earth.
- ^c Ps. 7. 15, 16.
& 9. 15. 6 ^d They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down:
They have digged a pit before me,
Into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.
- ^m Ps. 108. 1,
&c. 7 ^m My heart is ¹fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:
I will sing and give praise.
- ⁿ Ps. 16. 9.
& 30. 12.
& 108. 1, 2.
^o Ps. 103. 3. 8 Awake up, ⁿmy glory; awake, psaltery and harp:
I *myself* will awake early.
- ^p Ps. 36. 5.
& 71. 19.
& 103. 11.
& 108. 4.
^q ver. 5. 9 ^o I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people:
I will sing unto thee among the nations.
- 10 ^p For thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens,
And thy truth unto the clouds.
- 11 ^q Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens:
Let thy glory be above all the earth.

PSALM LVIII.

^a Ps. 57, title.To the chief Musician, ^aAl-taschith, Michtam of David.

- 1 DO ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?
Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?
- 2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness;
^aYe weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.
- 3 ^bThe wicked are estranged from the womb:
They go astray ³as soon as they be born, speaking lies.
- 4 ^cTheir poison *is* ⁴like the poison of a serpent:
They are like ^cthe deaf ⁵adder *that* stoppeth her ear;
- 5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers,
⁶Charming never so wisely.
- ^e Job 4. 10. 6 ^e Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth:
Ps. 3. 7. Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.
- ¹ Or, *prepared*. ³ Heb. *from the belly*. ⁵ Or, *esp.*
² Or, *Destroy not, A golden* ⁴ Heb. *according to the like-* ⁶ Or, *be the charmer never*
Psalms of David. *ness.* *so cunning.*

lowers of Saul; here in the lions' den he is far safer.

5. *above the heavens*] *i.e.* Let the deliverance be such that heaven and earth may recognize the triumph of righteousness.

6. *they are fallen*] There may be an allusion to Saul's adventure in the cave at Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv), but the metaphor is common (see marg. ref.).

8. *I myself will awake early*] Or, more poetically, "I will wake the morning."

LVIII. A Psalm of stern reproof, such as a king succeeding to a period of anarchy and turbulence might address to unrighteous judges. It belongs probably to the first year of David's reign.

1. *O congregation*]. The word so rendered elsewhere means "silence," "dumbness:" hence some translate "Do ye indeed utter long (and) silent judgment?" (with ref. to 2 Sam. xv. 3 &c.). Others, by a slight alteration, read "O ye gods," *i.e.* O ye judges, representatives of the divine power; or, "O ye mighty ones." The word has probably been interpolated by a transcriber; there is no indication of the meaning "congrega-

tion," or "silence," in early translations.

2. *ye weigh*] A bitter sarcasm; instead of meting out, weighing all things in the balance of justice (Job xxxi. 6), they weigh out and distribute their own violence.

4. The adder appears to be specially noticed both as one of the most venomous snakes and as that which serpent-charmers find most difficulty in subduing (cp. Eccl. x. 11).

5. *charmers*] Lit. "whisperers." The word describes the inarticulate murmurs of enchanters.

charming] Or, of one that bindeth charms skilfully: referring probably to tying knots, a symbol of the restraining force of the incantation. The word rendered "skilfully" means thoroughly experienced, an adept in charming.

6. The power of wrong-doing must be put down: if the poison cannot be drawn out, the fangs must be broken. The Psalmist next reverts to a favourite image, and describes the cruel jouge as the lion in full vigour, whose great jaw-teeth must be broken.

- 7 ¹Let them melt away as waters which run continually: ¹ Josh. 7. 5.
 When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut Ps. 112. 10.
 in pieces.
- 8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: ² Job 3. 16.
²Like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the Ecc. 6. 3.
 sun.
- 9 Before your pots can feel the thorns,
 He shall take them away ³as with a whirlwind, ¹both living, and ³ Prov. 10.25.
 in his wrath.
- 10 ¹The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: ¹ Ps. 52. 6.
²He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. & 64. 10.
- 11 ¹So that a man shall say, Verily there is ²a reward for the right- ² 107. 42.
 eous: ¹ Ps. 68. 23.
¹ Ps. 92. 15.
 Verily he is a God that ³judgeth in the earth. ³ Ps. 67. 4.
² 96. 13.
¹ 98. 9.

PSALM LIX.

To the chief Musician, ³* Al-taschith, Michtam of David; * when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

³ Ps. 57, title.
² 1 Sam. 19.
 11.
¹ Ps. 18. 48.

- 1 DELIVER ¹me from mine enemies, O my God:
¹Defend me from them that rise up against me.
- 2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
 And save me from bloody men.
- 3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul:
²The mighty are gathered against me;
¹Not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.
- 4 They run and prepare themselves without my fault:
¹Awake ²to help me, and behold.

² Ps. 56. 6.
¹ 1 Sam. 24.
 11.
¹ Ps. 35. 23.
 & 44. 23.

¹ Heb. as living as wrath.

³ Or, Destroy not. A golden Psalm of David.

⁴ Heb. set me on high.

² Heb. fruit of the, &c.
 Isai. 3. 10.

⁵ Heb. to meet me.

7. when he bendeth &c.] The original perhaps means, "just at the moment that he is bending his bow (preparing to shoot), ere he can adjust the bow, let them be broken; let them and their instruments of evil perish together." Others read, "God shooteth His arrows, so are they cut off."

8. untimely birth] Or, "abortion." The first clause may be rendered, "as a snail which one crushes, and it perishes," or "as a snail goes melting away."

9. Or, Before your pots feel the thorn (i.e. before the fire of the thorns makes itself felt), be it (the thorn) quick or be it dry, the whirlwind will sweep it away. The wicked are compared to a heap of thorns, some green, some dried up, lighted under a caldron, and then swept away by a sudden storm; and just as the thorns are swept away before they have heated the pots, so all the plans of the wicked are frustrated by their sudden and complete destruction. The comparison of wicked men to thorns, easily set on fire, and scattered by a blast of wind, is familiar to David (2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7).

10. wash his feet] A lesson not of vengeance but of warning. David has had no part in the destruction; that has been the work of Him to Whom vengeance belongeth.

11. a God that judgeth] The words are in the plural. Hence instead of "God" it may be better to render the word "Deity" or Godhead, "truly the Godhead judgeth the earth;" or to refer it to "manifold divine agencies."

LIX. The inscription states the circumstances under which the Psalm was composed, and these are borne out by the contents. This Psalm is therefore, in all probability, one of the very oldest writings of David which has been preserved to us.

The structure is highly artistic, and resembles that of other early Psalms of David. The refrain at vv. 10, 17 divides it into two parts, subdivided severally at vv. 5, 13 by Selah.

1. Defend me] Or, as marg., set me on high; i.e. on a high place (see xx. 1, marg.).

3. "Lying in wait," and "mighty" or strong ones are words especially suitable to the emissaries of Saul, who watched David's house to slay him in the morning.

4. run and prepare themselves] Both words denote the prompt and officious servility of hirelings.

Awake to help me] An address that would specially suggest itself to David beset by assassins in the deep loneliness of night.

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen :

Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

* ver. 14.

6 ^eThey return at evening : they make a noise like a dog,^e
And go round about the city.

7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth :

^fSwords *are* in their lips :

For ^gwho, *say they*, doth hear ?

8 But ^hthou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them ;

Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of his strength* will I wait upon thee :

ⁱFor God *is* ^jmy defence.

10 The God of my mercy shall ^kprevent me :

God shall let ^lme see *my desire* upon ^mmine enemies.

11 ⁿSlay them not, lest my people forget :

Scatter them by thy power ; and bring them down,

O Lord our shield.

12 ^oFor the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips

Let them even be taken in their pride :

And for cursing and lying *which* they speak.

13 ^pConsume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may not be* :

And ^qlet them know that God ruleth in Jacob

Unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

q ver. 6.

14 And ^rat evening let them return ; *and* let them make a noise like a dog,
And go round about the city.

¹ Heb. *my high place*.

² Heb. *mine observers*, Ps. 56. 2.

5. *all the heathen*] The Psalmist cannot think of his own danger and deliverance without reverting to the condition of his country. Saul (cp. liv. 3 note)-appears to have employed aliens, especially when persecuting one who, as he well knew, was loved by all true Hebrews.

wicked transgressors] The Hebrew words denote treachery and faithlessness. David thus describes two classes of persecutors, men who as aliens would be wholly without sympathy, and others who had treacherously deserted their comrade in the hour of trial.

6. The meaning appears to be that after an unsuccessful search of the house on the first morning (1 Sam. xix. 11), Saul's emissaries return in the evening, prowl about the gates, snarling and growling like hounds at fault, going to and fro in the city to occupy every egress and cut off David's flight.

7. *they belch out*] The word properly denotes the seething of a caldron, the gushing of a spring of water, or the heaving of a fermenting mass.

For who, say they, doth hear?] The words may represent the Psalmist's feelings and convey an expostulation ; his enemies utter their threats without fear that they will be heard and punished by the righteous Judge.

8. *shalt laugh at them*] This phrase has a peculiar fitness if referred to the stratagem by which Saul's emissaries were baffled and mocked (see marg. ref.) : but it expresses generally the truth that the machinations of God's enemies are not less absurd than wicked.

9. *his strength*] Probably the "strength" of Saul his real enemy.

11. *slay them not*] This prayer is suitable to the circumstances of the inscription ; and its application to the dispersion and miseries of the Hebrews for the murder of their Saviour is obvious.

12. Their words are sheer sin, nothing but sin : but the rendering "Oh the sin of their mouth ! Oh the word of their lips !" seems preferable.

in their pride] Perhaps with reference to the proud words "who doth hear ?" (v. 7).

13. Or, **Make an end in wrath, make an end!** After undergoing such punishments as may warn the people, let them perish, that all may learn the truth which they have denied.

unto the ends of the earth] i.e. Wherever they may wander when scattered. Their punishment would thus become subservient to the cause of truth ; a prophetic utterance which has been illustrated by the dispersion of the Jews.

14. *let them return*] Or, **they return, &c.**

- 15 Let them ¹wander up and down ¹for meat,
²And grudge if they be not satisfied. ^r Job 15. 23.
Ps. 109. 10.
- 16 But I will sing of thy power ;
 Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning :
 For thou hast been my defence
 And refuge in the day of my trouble.
- 17 Unto thee, ^oO my strength, will I sing : ^{*} Ps. 18. 1.
¹For God *is* my defence, and the God of my mercy. ^c ver. 9, 10.

PSALM LX.

To the chief Musician ^uupon Shushan-eduth, ³Michtam of David, to teach ; ^{*}when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand. ^{*} Ps. 80, title.
^{*} 2 Sam. 8. 3, 13.
¹ Chr. 18. 3, 12.
^c Ps. 44. 9.

- 1 O GOD, ^athou hast cast us off, thou hast ⁴scattered us,
 Thou hast been displeased ; O turn thyself to us again.
- 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble ; thou hast broken it :
^bHeal the breaches thereof ; for it shaketh.
- 3 ^cThou hast shewed thy people hard things :
^dThou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
- 4 ^eThou hast given a banner to them that fear thee,
 That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.
- 5 ^fThat thy beloved may be delivered ;
 Save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.
- 6 God hath ^gspoken in his holiness ; ^h 2 Chr. 7. 14.
^c Ps. 71. 20.
^d Isai. 51. 17, 22.
Jer. 25. 15.
^e Ps. 20. 5.
^f Ps. 106. 6, &c.
^g Ps. 89. 35.

¹ Heb. to eat.² Or, if they be not satis-

fied, then they will stay all night.

³ Or, A golden Psalm.⁴ Heb. broken.

The words do not express a wish, but describe a fact.

15. *Let them &c.*] Or, **They prowl about to devour ; if they are not satisfied, then will they pass the night.** The guards took up their station at the door of David's house (1 Sam. xix. 11).

LX. According to the inscription this Psalm belongs to the time when David was engaged in the great war with the Syrians and Ammonites. It implies, however, that very serious and alarming reverses had taken place, of which no record is preserved in the Historical Books. The Edomites had probably taken advantage of the absence of the king with his army, and ravaged the southern district. The Psalm expresses great affliction at the reverses, with a certain anticipation of victory. The Psalm is essentially Davidic in style, feeling, and historical allusions, and is divided into three strophes (vv. 1-4, 5-8, 9-12).

Shushan-eduth] Lit. "the lily of testimony." See Ps. xlv. inscription.

Aram-naharaim] Syria of the two rivers, i.e. Mesopotamia ; this region is not mentioned in 2 Sam. viii., but it was either subject to the king of Zobah, or in close alliance with him. The situation of Zobah is uncertain ; it probably extended over the greater part of the region between the Euphrates and Orontes.

when Joab returned] The Psalm appears to have been written just when David was setting out on the expedition. Joab's victory over the Edomites is probably men-

tioned in 2 Sam. viii. 12 (see note), where instead of Syria, the reading should be Edom. *the valley of salt*] The barren district about 8 miles broad to the south of the Dead Sea.

1. *cast us off*] The expression denotes a severe check, if not defeat, of the main army. *scattered us*] Or, as in the marg.; the word does not necessarily denote a complete rout of the army, but a break of the line.

displeased] Implying a consciousness of some great fault in people or king.

2. *the earth*] Or, "the land." David's country is broken and convulsed as by an earthquake.

3. *wine of astonishment*] A common figure in the Prophetic Books (see marg. reff.).

4. The strain changes : the army, though broken, could be rallied, and the Psalmist points to the banner waving in the name of the God of Hosts (Jehovah Nissi, Ex. xvii. 15) ; around which all true-hearted Israelites would rally for the true and righteous cause.

because of the truth] The old Versions render "from the bow," which means that men will rally round the banner out of reach of the archers.

5. *thy beloved*] The fearers of the Lord (v. 4). Thus the first part of the Psalm closes, as usual, with a full strain of hope.

6. This introduces another subject. David had consulted God after the reverse, and now gives either the substance or the very words of the answer. It consists of two parts, first, an assurance of possession of the whole Israelitish territory ; secondly, of dominion over the neighbouring kingdoms.

^a Josh. 1. 6.
^c Gen. 12. 6.
^d Josh. 13. 27.

ⁱ See Deut.
 33. 17.
^m Gen. 49. 10.
ⁿ 2 Sam. 8. 2.
^o 2 Sam. 8. 14.
 Ps. 108. 9.
^p 2 Sam. 8. 1.

^q ver. 1.
 Ps. 44. 9.
 & 108. 11.
^r Josh. 7. 12.
^s Ps. 118. 8.
 & 146. 3.
^t Num. 24. 18.
 1 Chr. 19. 13.
^u Isai. 63. 3.

I will rejoice, I will ^adivide ^cShechem,
 And mete out ^kthe valley of Succoth.
 7 Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine;
ⁱEphraim also *is* the strength of mine head;
^mJudah *is* my lawgiver;
 8 ⁿMoab *is* my washpot;
^oOver Edom will I cast out my shoe:
^pPhilistia, ⁱtriumph thou because of me.

9 Who will bring me *into* the ²strong city?
 Who will lead me into Edom?

10 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *which* ^qhadst cast us off?
 And *thou*, O God, *which* didst ^rnot go out with our armies?

11 Give us help from trouble:—for ^svain is the ³help of man.

12 Through God ^twe shall do valiantly:
 For *ho it is that* shall ^utread down our enemies.

PSALM LXI.

To the chief Musician upon Neginah, *A Psalm* of David.

1 HEAR my cry, O God:—attend unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart
 is overwhelmed:

Lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.

¹ Or, *triumph thou over me*:
 (by an irony:) See Ps.

108. 9.

² Heb. *city of strength*? 2

Sam. 11. 1. & 12. 26.

³ Heb. *salvation*.

now in a state of revolt. This passage is repeated in cviii. 6–13.

in his holiness] Or, as in marg. ref. “by His holiness” (cp. Amos iv. 2). The word may however be rendered (as by the LXX., Vulg.) “in His Sanctuary,” i.e. from the Mercy-seat, whence the oracle went forth.

I will rejoice] The rejoicing of God implies the withdrawal of His anger. His joy is in the welfare of His people.

I will divide] Or, “portion out,” i.e. rule as king and judge with uncontested authority. Shechem and Succoth (to the east of Jordan) together represent the central region of Israel: they, as the king now feels, are not endangered.

7. *Gilead*] This promise secures David in the possession of the whole trans-Jordanic region: Manasseh and Ephraim complete the promise, which could not be claimed by any of his descendants after Solomon.

Judah is my lawgiver] See marg. ref. and Num. xxi. 18. This verse leaves no doubt as to the date of the Psalm. In David's reign and in that of Solomon, and *then only*, could it be said that the sceptre pertained to Judah, but that Ephraim was the strength of his head.

8. *Moab is my washpot*] A sarcasm which has peculiar point applied to a nation remarkable for arrogance (cp. Isai. xvi. 6), and just then reduced to utter subjugation. David was connected with Moab by his descent from Ruth, and in early life had been on terms of confidential friendship with its king (see 1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4); but owing possibly to the treatment of his parents (see marg. ref.) his feelings were changed to extreme bitterness.

cast out my shoe] The king regards Moab as a vessel fit only for the meanest uses; he casts the shoe, which he takes off in order to wash his feet, to Edom as a mere slave (cp. marg. ref.). Some conjecture that “casting a shoe” may have been a symbolical form of taking possession of a disputed district.

triumph thou because of me] Or, “unto me, O Philistia, shout loudly.” This appears to be a call to Philistia to join the king's army. The Cherethites and Pelethites, David's body-guard, are supposed to have consisted in part of men of Philistine descent (see also 2 Sam. xv. 18). The true rendering may however be in accordance with cviii. 9, “over Philistia is my triumphing.”

9. *Who will bring me*] The common Hebrew idiom to express an earnest longing or confident hope; equivalent to “O that He would lead me.”

strong city] Or “fortified city,” whether Petra (2 K. xiv. 7 note) or Rabbath Ammon.

10. A loving expostulation. God, who had apparently withdrawn His presence, will now grant all the desire of His servant.

LXI. This appears to have been composed when David was driven from Jerusalem by Absalom.

upon Neginah] See inscription to Ps. iv.

2. *From the end of the earth*] An expression natural to the king at a distance from the Sanctuary and capital of Palestine.

is overwhelmed] Or, *fainteth*. Cp. Prayer Book Version, “is in heaviness,” a good rendering.

lead me] Or, “Thou wilt lead me,” an expression of perfect trust.

the rock that is higher than I] i.e. A place

- 3 For thou hast been a shelter for me,
And ^aa strong tower from the enemy.
- 4 ^bI will abide in thy tabernacle for ever :
^cI will ¹trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.
- 5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows :
Thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.
- 6 ^{d2}Thou wilt prolong the king's life :
And his years ³as many generations.
- 7 He shall abide before God for ever :
O prepare ⁴mercy ^aand truth, *which* may preserve him.
- 8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever,
That I may daily perform my vows.

* Prov. 18. 10.

* Ps. 27. 4.

* Ps. 17. 8.

& 57. 1.

& 91. 4.

* Ps. 21. 4.

* Ps. 40. 11.

Prov. 20. 28.

PSALM LXII.

To the chief Musician, to * Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

- 1 ¹TRULY ^amy soul ^bwaiteth upon God :
From him *cometh* my salvation.
- 2 ^bHe only *is* my rock and my salvation ;
He *is* my ⁶defence ; ^cI shall not be greatly moved.
- 3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man ?
Ye shall be slain all of you :
^dAs a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*
- 4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency :
They delight in lies :
^eThey bless with their mouth, but they curse ⁷inwardly. Selah.
- 5 ^fMy soul, wait thou only upon God ;
For my expectation *is* from him.

* 1 Chr. 25.

1, 3.

* Ps. 33. 20.

* ver. 6.

* Ps. 37. 24.

* Isai. 30. 13.

* Ps. 28. 3.

* ver. 1, 2.

¹ Or, *make my refuge.*² Heb. *Thou shalt add days to the days of the king.*³ Heb. *as generation and generation.*⁴ Or, *Only.*⁵ Heb. *is silent*, Ps. 65. 1.⁶ Heb. *high place*, Ps. 59.

9. 17.

⁷ Heb. *in their inward parts.*

of perfect security, which is too high for me to climb unaided.

4. *thy tabernacle*] The heavenly home represented by the earthly Tabernacle from which the king was banished.

for ever] Lit. "ages," equivalent to "eternity." The prayer involves a sure faith in a future state of blessedness.

I will trust &c.] Or, *Let me find shelter in the covert of Thy wings.* The Psalmist refers to the outspread wings of the Cherubim on the Mercy-seat. The Tabernacle was a figure of the heavenly Sanctuary; the Cherubim represented the protecting love of the heavenly King, and were the recognized symbols of His Presence.

5. *the heritage*] Specially, the everlasting heritage described in v. 4.

6. *Thou wilt prolong*] See marg. *i.e.* Thou wilt not merely prolong His life, but add to His natural life another life, even an eternal one. That David speaks here and in v. 7 of the Messiah seems quite clear.

8. *for ever*] One more proof of David's belief, not merely in the continuance, but eternity, of personal consciousness.

LXII. This bears a close resemblance in style and structure to the xxxixth, and was undoubtedly written by the same author.

The date of the composition is uncertain. It is more hopeful than the Psalms written about the time of Absalom's revolt, though some expressions may seem to refer to the outburst of an insurrection.

Jeduthun] See inscription to Ps. xxxix.

1. *Truly*] Or, "only" (v. 2, 5, 6). The Hebrew word is a particle adding force to the assertion and excluding contradiction. It would be better to keep to one translation. *waiteth*] Or, "My soul is silently waiting unto God," *i.e.* turned towards Him in speechless expectation.

3. *imagine mischief*] The Hebrew word, which occurs in no other passage, probably means "assault," "rush with violence;" and it seems to imply the outburst of an insurrection.

ye shall be slain &c.] The meaning of the original appears rather to be "How long will ye all of you unite to crush a man like a bowing wall, a tottering hedge?" As though David were in such state that a violent blow would cause his destruction.

4. *with their mouth*] Lit. "They bless with his mouth." The Psalmist individualizes the ringleader Ahithophel.

5. *wait*] Or, *be silent* (see v. :

- 6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation :
He is my defence ; I shall not be moved.
- 7 *In God is* my salvation and my glory :
 The rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.
- 8 Trust in him at all times ; ye people,
Pour out your heart before him :
 God *is* *'a* refuge for us. Selah.
- 9 *Surely* men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree
are a lie :
 To be laid in the balance, they *are* *'altogether* *lighter* than
 vanity.
- 10 Trust not in oppression,—and become not vain in robbery :
If riches increase, set not your heart *upon* them.
- 11 God hath spoken *"once* ;—twice have I heard this ;
 That *"power* *belongeth* unto God.
- 12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* *"mercy* :
 For *"thou* renderest to every man according to his work.

PSALM LXIII.

A Psalm of David, * when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

- 1 O GOD, thou *art* my God ; early will I seek thee :
"My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee
 In a dry and *"thirsty* land, *"where* no water is ;
- 2 To see *"thy* power and thy glory,
 So as *I* have seen thee in the sanctuary.

¹ Or, *alike*.

² Or, *strength*.

³ Heb. *weary*.

⁴ Heb. *without water*.

6. *be moved*] Cp. v. 2, and note the increase of David's confidence.

7. *In God*] Or, *On God rests my salvation and my glory*.

8. *ye people*] *i.e.* David's own adherents who need exhortation and comfort, and are in a fit state to pour out their hearts in prayer.

9. As in xlix. 2 (see note), the Psalmist uses two words for "man," the first equivalent to a common man, the other to a distinguished man.

a lie...vanity] David looks calmly at all his enemies, the mass as a mere mob, their leaders but empty boasters.

To be laid in the balance &c.] Or, *in the scales they go up, they are altogether lighter than mere breath*.

10. *in oppression*] This points to the tyranny of the nobles, among whom Absalom may have found his chief supporters.

become not vain in robbery] *i.e.* Trust not vainly in rapine : a trait of the times (cp. Prov. i. 10-14), indicative of a spirit of brigandage among the nobles.

11. *God hath spoken once*] The Psalmist speaks of an inward revelation to his conscience. Man listens, and hears the two great lessons of divine power and divine justice, shown in mercy and perfect retribution.

LXIII. The indications of time, place, and circumstances in this Psalm are distinct and in accordance with the inscription, which attributes it to David. It may

be supposed to have been composed on the morning after the flight from Jerusalem, when "the king, and all that were with him, came weary" and took up their first night-quarters (2 Sam. xvi. 14).

This Psalm was sung at daily matins in the earliest ages of the Church.

the wilderness] The barren and dry country between Jerusalem and Jericho. David passed two days in it in a state of great weariness and exhaustion (cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 2, 29).

1. *my God*] David uses the name El, which expresses the might of God, in which in all his weakness he retains trust.

early will I seek thee] Here, not so much idiomatically for earnest seeking (Job vii. 21, note), but literally denoting the prayer offered at the first burst of dawn, when the king awoke "refreshed" (cp. vv. 5-7 ; 2 Sam. xvi. 14).

longeth] The Hebrew word occurs in no other passage ; it seems to denote exhaustion and longing.

thirsty land] Lit. as in the marg., "weary," an epithet peculiarly applicable to the desert (see Isai. xxxii. 2). The Psalmist undoubtedly suggests a comparison between the "thirsty land" and his own longing heart.

2. *Render, Thus have I contemplated Thee in the Sanctuary, to behold Thy strength and Thy glory* : *i.e.* the devout feelings which now possess me are the same

- 3 ^cBecause thy lovingkindness *is* better than life,
My lips shall praise thee. ° Ps. 30. 5.
- 4 Thus will I bless thee ^dwhile I live :
I will lift up my hands in thy name. ^d Ps. 104. 33.
& 146. 2.
- 5 My soul shall be ^esatisfied as with ¹marrow and fatness ;
And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips : ° Ps. 36. 8.
- 6 When ^fI remember thee upon my bed,
And meditate on thee in the *night* watches. ^f Ps. 42. 8.
& 119. 55.
& 140. 5.
- 7 Because thou hast been my help,
Therefore ^gin the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. ° Ps. 61. 4.
- 8 My soul followeth hard after thee :
Thy right hand upholdeth me.
- 9 But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy it,
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
- 10 ^hThey shall fall by the sword :—they shall be a portion for ^hfoxes. ^h Ezek. 35. 5.
- 11 But the king shall rejoice in God ;
ⁱEvery one that sweareth by him shall glory : ⁱ Isai. 45. 23.
& 65. 16.
But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. Zeph. 1. 5.

PSALM LXIV.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer :
Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide ^ame from the secret counsel of the wicked ;
From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity :
- 3 ^aWho whet their tongue like a sword, ^a Ps. 11. 2.
& 57. 4.

¹ Heb. *fatness*.² Heb. *They shall make**him run out like water by
the hands of the sword.*

as those with which I was animated when I worshipped in the Sanctuary, and realized the strength and glory associated with and symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant.

3. *is better than life*] David's life was in great peril, but God's loving favour was secure ; a feeling inseparable from a faith in a future state (see xvi. 8-10).

4. *Thus &c.*] i.e. As I adored Thee in the Sanctuary, and as I seek Thee now (v. 1), even so will I bless Thee throughout my life, which is only precious so far as it has the lovingkindness of God shining upon it.

5. The king, though in deepest suffering, is yet inwardly full of joy (cp. Rom. viii. 35-37).

7. *in the shadow of thy wings*] The Ark with the Mercy-seat overshadowed by the cherubic wings was absent, but the power which they represented was present, full of comfort and help.

8. The first clause describes the cleaving of the soul to God, the second God's steadfast support of it. To understand this Psalm the reader must follow it in prayer.

9. *to destroy it*] See 2 Sam. xvii. 1-3. Some render "to their own destruction," and see the fulfilment in Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23).

the lower parts of the earth] i.e. The grave or to Sheol (cp. lxxxvi. 13).

10. The first clause of this verse means, "they shall shed him (i.e. shed his blood) like water by means of the sword;" and points to an individual who is to perish by a violent death (e.g. Ahithophel and Absalom). The second clause speaks of the fate of the rebels ; they should be a portion for foxes, or jackals ; a prediction exactly fulfilled (see 2 Sam. xviii. 8).

11. *the king*] i.e. David (cp. lxi. 6), realizing his restoration to kingly estate, after the ruin of his enemies.

sweareth by him] i.e. by God (cp. Deut. vi. 13).

that speak lies] The special guilt of David's accusers (see xxxviii. 12, xli. 5-8).

LXIV. This bears a close resemblance to many Psalms which are ascribed to David, especially the viiith. It belongs probably to the time when David first had reason to suspect the existence of the formidable conspiracy which drove him from Jerusalem.

2. Note the two forms of danger, (1) the secret conspiracy of which the king suspected the existence, and (2) open bursts of disaffection.

3. *their tongue*] The slanders of David's enemies were in fact the immediate cause of his overthrow (see 2 Sam. xv. 2-6).

^b Ps. 58. 7.
Jer. 9. 3.

^b And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect:
Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

^c See Prov.
1. 11.

5 ^c They encourage themselves in an evil ¹ matter:

They commune ² of laying snares privily;

^d Ps. 10. 11.
& 59. 7.

^d They say, Who shall see them?

6 They search out iniquities; ³ they accomplish ⁴ a diligent search:
Both the inward *thought* of every one of *them*, and the heart, is deep.

^e Ps. 7. 12, 13.

7 ^e But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow;

Suddenly ⁵ shall they be wounded.

^f Prov. 12. 13.
& 18. 7.

8 So they shall make ^f their own tongue to fall upon themselves:

^g Ps. 31. 11.
& 52. 6.

^g All that see them shall flee away.

^h Ps. 40. 3.
ⁱ Jer. 50. 28.

9 ^h And all men shall fear,—and shall ⁱ declare the work of God;
For they shall wisely consider of his doing.

^j Ps. 32. 11.
& 58. 10.

10 ^k The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him;

^k Ps. 32. 11.
& 58. 10.
& 68. 3.

And all the upright in heart shall glory.

PSALM LXV.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David.

1 PRAISE ^a waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion:

And unto thee shall the vow be performed.

^a Isai. 66. 23.

2 O thou that hearest prayer,—^a unto thee shall all flesh come.

¹ Or, *speech*.

² Heb. to hide snares.

³ Or, we are consumed by

that which they have
thoroughly searched.

⁴ Heb. a search searched.

⁵ Heb. their wound shall be.

⁶ Heb. is silent, Ps. 62. 1.

bead] See marg. ref. The expression is probably chosen to denote the deliberate malignity with which the slanderer prepares his calumnies.

5. Or, **They strengthen for themselves an evil word**: i.e. the slander on which the hopes of the conspirators rest (see 2 Sam. xv. 3, 4). The charge of neglecting the administration of justice would perhaps tell more upon the popular mind than David's great crime, which touched directly but a single family.

they commune] They talk over every detail of their scheme.

laying snares privily] One object of their discussions was "to conceal their snares."

Who shall see them?] Cp. marg. ref. Godlessness is always represented as a special characteristic of David's enemies.

6. Or, **They devise iniquities**, (they say) **we have completed a well-devised device; and the inward (thought) of a man and his heart is deep**. The Psalmist hears them exulting in the secrecy of their plans, in the depth and subtlety of their thoughts. The word "a man" points probably at Ahithophel.

7. While they are bending their bow, adjusting their arrows, and taking deliberate aim, the shafts of God pierce them.

8. Lit. "And they shall cause him to stumble; against them is their own tongue; they will shake their heads at each other, every one triumphing over them." Each clause

has a distinct bearing upon the facts recorded in 2 Sam. xvii. 1-14.

LXV. Some think this Psalm to have been written upon the occasion of the Assyrian invasion (see Isai. xxxvii); and interpret the inscription as indicating the manner rather than the hand of David. The expressions do not seem such as would have been chosen to describe deliverance by the miraculous destruction of the Assyrians. The subject of it seems to be a plentiful harvest, possibly in a time of dangerous popular disturbance. Certain characteristics and minute correspondences with Pss. lx. and lxii. suggest that David was the author; while other words and phrases remind us of Psalms of the days of Hezekiah (e.g. Ps. xcvi.), and of Isaiah's later prophecies. Possibly the Psalm may have received alterations in course of time, and have been adapted to the Temple-service from an original song of David.

1. *Praise waiteth &c.*] Better as in the marg.; i.e. praise is fitly shewn to Thee by a holy silence, more expressive than words. The soul is filled with thoughts too big for utterance; these at last untie the tongue; and the Psalm which follows is their expression.

2. *O thou that hearest &c.*] The address to God by this title contrasts Him with idols who hear not (cxv. 4-7, cxxxv. 16). "All flesh" is a general expression descrip-

- 3 ^{b1} Iniquities prevail against me :
As for our transgressions, thou shalt 'purge them away.
- 4 ^d Blessed is the man whom thou 'choosest,
 And 'causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts :
 'We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,
Even of thy holy temple.
- 5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us,
 O God of our salvation ;
Who art the confidence of 'all the ends of the earth, and of them 'that are afar off upon the sea :
- 6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains ;
^b Being girded with power :
- 7 'Which stilleth the noise of the seas,
 The noise of their waves, ^k and the tumult of the people.
- 8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens :
 Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening ² to rejoice.
- 9 Thou ¹ visitest the earth, and ^{3m} waterest it :
 Thou greatly enrichest it
ⁿ With the river of God, *which is full of water :*
 Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.
- 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly : 'thou settlest the furrows thereof :
⁵ Thou ⁶ makest it soft with showers : thou blessest the springing thereof.

^b Ps. 38. 4.
 & 40. 12.
^c Ps. 51. 2.
 Isai. 6. 7.
 Heb. 9. 14.
 1 John 1. 7. 9.
^d Ps. 33. 12.
 & 84. 4.
^e Ps. 4. 3.
^f Ps. 36. 8.

^h Ps. 93. 1.
ⁱ Ps. 89. 9.
 & 107. 29.
 Matt. 8. 26.
^k Ps. 76. 10.

¹ Deut. 11. 12.
^m Ps. 68. 9, 10.
 & 104. 13.
 Jer. 5. 24.
ⁿ Ps. 46. 4.

¹ Heb. *Words*, or, *Mat-
 ters of iniquities.*
² Or, to sing.

³ Or, after thou hadst made
 it to desire rain.
⁴ Or, thou causest rain to

descend into the furrows
 thereof.
⁵ Heb. thou dissolvest it.

tive of a multitude of all sexes, ages, and conditions, that crowd to God's courts, pray, and have an answer.

3. *Iniquities*] Lit., as in the marg., suggestive of a long roll of sins, and many circumstances of them, which crowd the memory of the Psalmist.

purge away] Better, "Thou dost cover them." The pronoun is emphatic—Jehovah alone thus pardons.

4. The Temple or Sanctuary of God is described as His house, in which, as a princely host, He receives His chosen and bestows upon them all good.

5. *By terrible things &c.*] i.e. "By fearful (and) righteous judgments dost Thou answer us," i.e. hear and reply to us : "righteous" as done against His enemies. Cp. Deut. x. 21, 2 Sam. vii. 23, as illustrations.

the confidence &c.] The words do not express that all men in the earth and in the isles do, or will one day, hope in God ; but simply that God is their hope for a blessing or a curse, whether they know Him and feel for Him, or simply live by and through Him.

6. Notice the transition from the address to God, to a description of His majesty and creative power : hence some have thought that vv. 6, 7 were chanted by a chorus,

which responds to the people, who recited the other parts.

7. The raging waves suggest the raging of a people in popular tumult. The original resembles Isai. xvii. 12-14 : if written as some think in the time of Hezekiah, it may be an imitation of it.

8. *thy tokens*] i.e. Signs of God's Presence ; miracles of mercy and judgment (c. 5).
the outgoings of morning] i.e. The east, from which morning is poetically said to go forth. God's tokens fill the world with alarm ; but His mercies (these are intended) fill east and west with songs of joy.

9. A different punctuation is given in the Prayer Book.

the river of God] An epithet suitable to a well-watered land, watered by God's stream : others take the expression to mean "rain." God alone gives abundance, fills the rivers with water, and covers the land with corn, though man's labour seems to do something.

10. *Thou waterest... settlest*] Rather, "Water its ridges—lower its furrows—Thou softenest &c." The change in tense vividly depicts the land waiting for God's blessing of rain. All is done that man may do—the furrows are cut deep—the ridges stand straight—the seed is sown : "Now, O God,

- 11 Thou crownest ¹the year with thy goodness;
And thy paths drop fatness.
12 They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness:
And the little hills ²rejoice on every side.
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks;
³The valleys also are covered over with corn;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

³ Isai. 55. 12.

PSALM LXVI.

To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.

- ^a Ps. 100. 1. 1 ^aMAKE a joyful noise unto God, ³all ye lands:
^b Ps. 65. 5. 2 Sing forth the honour of his name:—make his praise glorious.
^c Ps. 18. 44. 3 Say unto God, How ^bterrible *art thou* in thy works!
^d Ps. 22. 27. & 67. 3. & 117. 1. ^cThrough the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies ⁴submit themselves unto thee.
^e Ps. 96. 1, 2. & 46. 8. 4 ^dAll the earth shall worship thee, and ^eshall sing unto thee;
They shall sing *to* thy name. Selah.
^f Ps. 14. 21. 5 ^fCome and see the works of God:
^g Ex. 14. 21. *He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*
^h Josh. 3. 14, 16. 6 ^gHe turned the sea into dry land:
ⁱ Ps. 11. 4. ^hThey went through the flood on foot:
There did we rejoice in him.
7 He ruleth by his power for ever;—ⁱhis eyes behold the nations:
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.
8 O bless our God, ye people,
And make the voice of his praise to be heard:
9 Which ^eholdeth our soul in life,
And ^ksuffereth not our feet to be moved.
^k Ps. 121. 3. 10 For ⁱthou, O God, hast proved us:
^l Ps. 17. 3. ^mThou hast tried us, as silver is tried.
^m Zech. 13. 9. 11 ⁿThou broughtest us into the net;
ⁿ Pet. 1. 6, 7. ^o Lam. 1. 13.

¹ Heb. *the year of thy goodness.*

³ Heb. *all the earth.*

⁵ Heb. *lie.*

² Heb. *are girded with joy.*

⁴ Or, *yield feigned obedience.* Ps. 18. 44. & 81. 15.

⁶ Heb. *putteth.*

send the needful showers, and bless the increase!"

11. *Thou crownest &c.*] Lit. "Thou hast crowned (*i.e.* with plenty) a year of Thy goodness (*i.e.* a year of mercies); and Thy paths (the tracks of chariot wheels: cp. xviii. 10, Deut. xxxiii. 26) drop fatness!"

12. *the pastures of the wilderness*] *i.e.* Patches of verdure in a desolate wilderness. These are spots visited by the Creator, and drop fatness, overflowing with plenty.

13. *they sing*] The valleys and fields sing on account of the abundance of God's gifts.

LXVI. This and the following Psalms were evidently intended for public recitation in the Temple. They are generally thought to be the compositions of one of the great Levitical families, to whom the Temple-services were committed by David.

This Psalm celebrates a great deliverance; it speaks of a season of severe trial and affliction; in allusion either to events in the time of Hezekiah, or possibly to some in the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat.

The metres are regular, and distinctly marked by Selah.

1. *all ye lands*] Or, as in the marg. The whole world is called upon to rejoice in the manifestation of God's righteousness. There is in this, and throughout the Psalm (see *rv.* 4, 8), a clear reference to the Messianic hopes which lay deep in the heart of every true Israelite.

3. *submit themselves*] Lit. as in the marg. Cp. the Prayer-Book Version, "shall be found liars unto thee."

6. *He turned the sea &c.*] *i.e.* the Red Sea at the Exodus, and the Jordan at the entrance into Canaan; events which delivered Israel, established its dominion, and were pledges of its future permanence.

9. The expressions of this verse point to a time when Israel, though afflicted and severely tried, still retained its national life and independence.

10. *tried us*] With a fiery trial, as in a furnace.

11. *the net*] The Israelites are represented as animals caught in the hunter's snares, and then shut up in a place of confinement. Cp. David's condition in exile under Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 1, &c.).

Thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

- 12 ^oThou hast caused men to ride over our heads;
²We went through fire and through water:
 But thou broughtest us out into a ¹wealthy place.
- 13 ^qI will go into thy house with burnt offerings:
^rI will pay thee my vows,
 14 Which my lips have ²uttered,
 And my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.
- 15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of ³fatlings,
 With the incense of rams;
 I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.
- 16 ^{*}Come and hear, all ye that fear God,
 And I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
- 17 I cried unto him with my mouth,
 And he was extolled with my tongue.
- 18 ^tIf I regard iniquity in my heart,
 The Lord will not hear me:
 19 But verily God ^uhath heard me;
 He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
- 20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer,
 Nor his mercy from me.

^o Isai. 51. 23.

² Isai. 43. 2.

^q Ps. 100. 4.

& 116. 14, 17,

18, 19.

^r Eccles. 5.5.

^{*} Ps. 34. 11.

^t Job 27. 9.

Prov. 15. 29.

& 28. 9.

Isai. 1. 15.

John 9. 31.

Jam. 4. 3.

^u Ps. 116. 1, 2.

PSALM LXVII.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.

- 1 GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us;
 And ^acause his face to shine ⁴upon us; Selah.
- 2 That ^bthy way may be known upon earth,
^cThy saving health among all nations.
- ¹ Heb. moist. ² Heb. openeth. ³ Heb. marrow. ⁴ Heb. with us.

^a Ps. 4. 6.

& 31. 16.

& 80. 3, 7.

& 119. 135.

^b Acts 18. 25.

^c Luke 2. 30.

31.

Tit. 2. 11.

affliction] Heavy pressure, as of an over-laden beast of burden. Cp. lv. 3, where the word is rendered "oppression."

12. *ride over our heads*] Cp. the representations, very common on Egyptian monuments, of a conqueror driving his chariot over his prostrate foes.

But thou broughtest] This abrupt transition seems to indicate the speedy and complete dispersion of an invading force, followed by a season of great abundance.

15. *the incense*] *i.e.* the smoke ascending as a cloud from the burnt sacrifice, which is always represented as a sweet savour acceptable as a symbol of the offerer's devotion (see cxli. 2 note).

18. *If I regard*] *i.e.* with deliberate approval. The writer is fully conscious that there are in him sins of infirmity, error or ignorance, but not presumptuous sin.

LXVII. This Psalm was evidently composed for liturgical use; its date is uncertain, but it is probably later than David's time. Its great thought is longing for the conversion of the world, which stamps it in the highest and most spiritual sense a Messianic Psalm; not indeed, strictly speaking, predictive, but expressing hopes and anticipations completely fulfilled by the manifestation of God in Christ.

The structure is graceful, resembling

that of early Psalms; the introductory and following strophes are marked by "Selah."

1. *God be merciful unto us, &c.*] This is taken from the High-Priest's blessing (Num. vi. 24-26); but with a striking and important variation. It substitutes Elohim for Jehovah, apparently because in most of the liturgical Psalms, which were composed by the leaders of the Levitical choirs, the name Elohim is generally, though not exclusively, used. This may be because that name specially denotes the majesty and might of the Deity: whereas the High-Priest in blessing the people uses the other name, which speaks most distinctly of covenant privileges.

upon us] As in Numbers; here, lit. as in the marg., "with us," abiding with us, our protector and guide (cp. lxvi. 20).

2. *That thy way*] A remarkable prayer; the effect of God's goodness to Israel will be the conversion of the world (cp. cxviii. 3). In this and the next verse three distinct words designate foreign nations; they are regarded under the various aspects of foreigners, races, and communities: without losing their permanent characteristics they will be united in one religious community. In this verse the word rendered "nations" means *Gentiles*.

- ^a Ps. 66. 4. 3 ^aLet the people praise thee, O God;
Let all the people praise thee.
- ^c Ps. 90. 10, 13. & 98. 9. 4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy:
For ^cthou shalt judge the people righteously,
And ¹govern the nations upon earth. Selah.
- 5 Let the people praise thee, O God;
Let all the people praise thee.
- ^f Ps. 85. 12. & Ezek. 34. 27. 6 ^fThen shall the earth yield her increase;
And God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.
- 7 God shall bless us;
- ^g Ps. 22. 27. And ^gall the ends of the earth shall fear him.

PSALM LXVIII.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

- ^a Isai. 33. 3. 1 LET ^aGod arise, let his enemies be scattered:
Let them also that hate him flee ²before him.
- ^b Isai. 9. 18. Hos. 13. 3. ^c Ps. 97. 5. Mic. 1. 4. 2 ^bAs smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away:
^cAs wax melteth before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
- ^d Ps. 32. 11. & 58. 10. & 64. 10. 3 But ^dlet the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God:
Yea, let them ³exceedingly rejoice.
- ^e Ps. 66. 4. 4 ^eSing unto God, sing praises to his name:
^fExtol him that rideth upon the heavens
^gBy his name JAH, and rejoice before him.
- ^h Ps. 10. 14. & 146. 9. 5 ^hA father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows,
Is God in his holy habitation.

¹ Heb. *lead*.² Heb. *from his face*.³ Heb. *rejoice with gladness*.

4. Nations shall rejoice because of the establishment of a universal kingdom of righteousness. This Psalm brings one stream of Messianic prophecy, which presents the approach of a perfect manifestation of God, near to the point of junction with the other, which announces the advent and reign of a perfect King. See p. 102.

govern] Better as marg.; *i.e.* be their guide: a promise of peculiar graciousness (cp. xxiii. 3, xxxi. 3), used elsewhere only of God's faithful and tried servants.

6. *Then shall the earth*] Or, "The land hath given her increase;" not only an expression of thankfulness for an abundant harvest, but more probably predictive, announcing the certain result of divine blessings. It is taken from Lev. xxvi. 4. Cp. marg. ref.

LXVIII. The title ascribes the Psalm to David. The prominence of Egypt and Ethiopia (v. 31), and silence touching Babylon and Assyria, favour the supposition of a very early date. The style is abrupt, fragmentary, rugged, astonishingly graphic and forcible, and bespeaks an age of earliest poetry.

It seems impossible to fix the exact occasion for which it was composed. It is a song of national thanksgiving for mercies and triumphs vouchsafed up to the day of its composition; followed by deeply earnest,

if not Messianic, anticipations of victories over the whole world, consequent upon Jehovah's choice of Zion.

The great difference of opinion which exists among commentators, some accounting this Psalm one of the very earliest, and some, one of the very latest, shews how impossible it is to settle the question of its date by internal evidence. The original song of David may have received additions in later times for Temple-service; additions which it is now scarcely possible to separate from the original composition. In the Jewish ritual the Psalm is used at Pentecost, the Feast of Thanksgiving for Harvest; [in the Church of England it is used on Whitsunday.]

1, 2. *Let God arise &c.*] Cp. Num. x. 35. Here Elohim is substituted for Jehovah (cp. lxvii. 1 note), and the 3rd person for the 2nd.

4. *upon the heavens*] Lit. "over the deserts." The image presented to us in the literal rendering is that of a king travelling through the waste, for whom a way is made (cp. for the image, Isai. xl. 3, lvii. 14).

by his name Jah] "Jah" is the expressive abbreviated form of Jehovah, familiar to all from its occurrence in Hallelujah. "His name is in Jah:" His essence, unchanging, eternal, self existing, is expressed in His ancient time-honoured title.

6 'God setteth the solitary ¹in families :

*He bringeth out those which are bound with chains :
But 'the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

7 O God, ^mwhen thou wentest forth before thy people,
When thou didst march through the wilderness ; Selah :

8 "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of
God :

*Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of
Israel.*

9 "Thou, O God, didst ²send a plentiful rain,
Whereby thou didst ³confirm thine inheritance, when it was
weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein :

"Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word :

Great *was* the 'company of those that published it.

12 "Kings of armies ⁴did flee apace :

And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 "Though ye have lien among the pots,

*Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver,
And her feathers with yellow gold.

14 'When the Almighty scattered kings ⁶in it,
It was *white* as snow in Salmon.

¹ Heb. *in a house*.

² Heb. *shake out*.

³ Heb. *confirm it*.

⁴ Heb. *army*.

⁵ Heb. *did flee, did flee*.

⁶ Or, *for her, she was*.

¹ 1 Sam. 2. 5.

Ps. 113. 9.

² Ps. 107. 10.

& 146. 7.

Acts 12. 6.

³ Ps. 107. 34,

40.

⁴ Ex. 13. 21.

Judg. 4. 14.

Hab. 3. 13.

⁵ Isai. 64. 1, 3.

⁶ Deut. 11.

11, 12.

Ezek. 34. 26.

⁷ Deut. 26. 5,

9.

Ps. 74. 19.

⁸ Num. 31.

8, 9, 54.

Josh. 10. 16.

& 12. 8.

⁹ Ps. 81. 6.

¹⁰ Ps. 105. 37.

¹¹ Num. 21. 3,

Josh. 10. 10.

& 12. 1.

6. *which are bound...the rebellious.*] The allusion is to the wanderers in the wilderness. Some of them reached a home in the land of promise, but the most part perished through their rebellion in the waste.

7, 8. The miracles of the march : and first, the appearance of God in Sinai (Ex. xix. 16, 18), the most signal of all. The description of the miracles of the desert moves the soul of the Psalmist most deeply, and calls for special musical accompaniment ("Selah;" see p. 104 n.).

8. *the heavens also dropped*] Cp. Judg. v. 4. The phrase depicts the floods of rain which accompanied the awful storm of thunder and lightning. Thunder, lightning, and a thick cloud are described as upon the mount.

9. The rain is metaphorical, and signifies the abundant blessings of manna (lxxviii. 24; Exod. xvi. 4), food, water, &c. through which the wanderers (God's "inheritance") were preserved.

10. *Thy congregation*] The word so rendered is of doubtful import. The LXX. render "Thy living creatures."

prepared] i.e. "a table in the wilderness." Cp. 1 Chr. xii. 39.

11-14. From the march through the wilderness to the borders of the promised land, the Psalmist naturally turns to such a victory as that of Deborah and Barak.

11. *The Lord gave the word*] i.e. of command; and victory followed, as in the beginning light and life followed His word (xxxiii. 6 &c.; Gen. i. 3).

great was the company &c.] Lit. "the women publishing, or proclaiming the glad news, are (or were) a great host;" or "a great host of women sang the song of triumph." Cp. Ex. xv. 20; Judg. v.; 1 Sam. xviii. 6.

12. *Kings of armies* (opposed to Jehovah, the God of armies) *flee, flee away* (see Judg. v. 3, 19). For the latter clause of the verse, see Judg. v. 30. It is possible that we have here the words of the original song of victory.

13. Cp. Judg. v. 16. So now (in imitation of that song), "What! dwell ye among the sheepfolds?" or, "Will ye lie among the sheepfolds?"—The wings of a dove are covered with silver, and her feathers with pale green gold;" an expression, abrupt, allusive, and perhaps ironical. The tribes who stay away from the fight are taunted, as in the verse of the Song of Deborah alluded to, with enjoying a country life, while Jehovah's battles are fought by others. According to this interpretation, the words, "What! dwell ye among sheepfolds?" &c., or, "Will ye lie among the sheepfolds?" &c., are the remonstrances addressed to the absent tribes : and the following words, "The wings of a dove" &c., are the supposed excuses of the indifferent ones in the midst of the flocks, herds, doves, of their rustic life, repeated in the address with a bitter irony.

14. *in it*] i.e. in the land. Some interpret the verse "When the Almighty scattered kings in the land, it was covered with booty

- 15 The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan ;
An high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.
- * Ps. 114. 4. 16 "Why leap ye, ye high hills?
" Deut. 12. 6, " *This is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in ;
11. Yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.
- Ps. 87. 1, 2. 17 "The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, ¹*even* thousands of
" Deut. 33. 2. angels :
Heb. 12. 22. The Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy place.
Rev. 9. 16.
- * Acts 1. 9. 18 "Thou hast ascended on high, "thou hast led captivity captive :
"a Judg. 5. 12. "Thou hast received gifts ²for men ;
"b Acts 2. 4, 33. Yea, *for* "the rebellious also, "that the LORD God might dwell
"c 1 Tim. 1. 13. among them.
"d Ps. 78. 60.
- 19 Blessed be the Lord, *who* daily loaded us *with* benefits,
Even the God of our salvation. Selah.
- "e Deut. 32. 39. 20 *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation ;
Prov. 4. 23. And "unto God the Lord *belong* the issues from death.
Rev. 1. 18.
& 20. 1. ¹ Or, even many thousands. ² Heb. in the man.

and the bodies of the slain, as Salmon with snow in winter." But the words of the original must be strained to bear this. Neither booty nor bodies, nor any comparison of them with snow, are mentioned. Salmon is seldom or never covered with snow; it is a low dark mountain near Sichem. In all likelihood the words are again extracted from a more ancient song, and the allusion in them may be undiscoverable. Supposing them to be such an extract, they may be the words of the indifferent ones above introduced, excusing themselves for their absence from the war on the ground that it was winter, and that snow covered the summit of the little low hill of Salmon.

Others consider the words as descriptive of what was unexpected or unusual, "When the Almighty scattered kings in the land, it was as marvellous as a fall of snow on Salmon."

15. Lit. "A mountain of God (see xxxvi. 6) is the mountain of Bashan: a mountain of peaks is the mountain of Bashan: why look ye askance, or enviously, ye high-peaked mountains, upon the mountain which God desires?" &c.

The subject changes. The lofty, many-peaked mountain-chain of Bashan, looking down upon the gently undulating, lowly hill of Zion, is addressed as though regarding with contempt and envy the choice of God to dwell upon the latter for ever (see cxxxii. 14; cp. 1 K. viii. 13). Bashan extended to the foot of Mount Hermon, so that the chain of Hermon, or Anti-Libanus, may be meant here; or Bashan may be used in a general way to signify a land outside the promised land, and unconnected with it. In v. 22, it is used to typify, generally, a wild inaccessible distant region, out of which none could bring back, except God. The joyous, exulting, triumphant air of the original can hardly be imitated in any rendering.

17. Lit. "The chariots of God, the in-

visible hosts by which He is surrounded (2 K. ii. 11, vi. 17; Dan. vii. 10), are twenty thousand, thousands, and again thousands. The Lord is in the midst of them: (it is a) Sinai in holiness, or in the Sanctuary." The purport is plain; Jehovah the heavenly King is manifest on Zion, as once on Sinai.

18. *Thou hast led captivity captive* &c.] Or, "Thou hast led captive the conquered enemy, received gifts among men (or, consisting of men: marg. "in the man," i.e. of men vanquished by the glory of the Victor, and devoted to Him); and (subdued) even the rebellious, that Jah Elohim should dwell among them." Jehovah as God ascends to His throne above, as Leader of His visible hosts, He leads captive the vanquished; all people give Him gifts (2 Sam. viii. 2, 6); the obstinate and rebellious too are subdued, and become part of His possession. The precise rendering of the original is doubtful: but of the general sense there is no doubt.

St. Paul (Eph. iv. 8) quotes the words differently, "Having ascended on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." He perhaps referred to the words as they would naturally be interpreted in the light of Christ's Ascension, and the sending down His gifts to man; and he quotes the spirit and substance of the passage rather than its actual words. As Jehovah ascended to Zion (and to heaven) followed by the vanquished, and laden with gifts to dwell among His people always, and to give gifts (see v. 19), so Christ ascended into heaven, and gave gifts of grace to His people: and to His office in heaven the following verses apply, as well as to that of Jehovah Himself.

19. Or, "Blessed be Jehovah, day by day He beareth our burdens."

20. *issues* i.e. Means of escape (cp. Eccl. vii. 18). As God is merciful to His friends, so to "His enemies" (vv. 21-23), unless

- 21 But ¹God shall wound the head of his enemies,
²And the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. ¹ Ps. 110. 6.
Hab. 3. 13.
² Ps. 55. 23.
- 22 The Lord said, I will bring ³again from Bashan,
 I will bring *my people* again ⁴from the depths of the sea: ³ Num. 21. 33.
⁴ Ex. 14. 22.
- 23 ⁵That thy foot may be ⁶dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies,
⁷And the tongue of thy dogs in the same. ⁵ Ps. 58. 10.
⁷ 1 K. 21. 19.
- 24 They have seen thy goings, O God;
 Even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.
- 25 ⁸The singer: went before, the players on instruments *followed*
 after; ⁸ 1 Chr. 13. 8.
⁹ 15. 16.
Ps. 47. 5.
 Among *them* were the damsels playing with timbrels.
- 26 Bless ye God in the congregations,
 Even the Lord, ⁹from ¹⁰the fountain of Israel. ⁹ Deut. 33. 23.
Isai. 48. 1.
¹⁰ 1 Sam. 9. 21.
- 27 There *is* ¹¹little Benjamin *with* their ruler,
 The princes of Judah ¹²and their council,
 The princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.
- 28 Thy God hath ¹³commanded thy strength:
 Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. ¹³ So Ps. 42. 3.
- 29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem
¹⁴Shall kings bring presents unto thee.
- 30 Rebuke ¹⁵the company of spearmen,
¹⁶The multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people,
Till every one ¹⁷submit himself with pieces of silver:
¹⁸Scatter thou the people *that* delight in war. ¹⁴ 1 K. 10.
10, 24, 25.
¹⁵ 2 Chr. 32. 23.
Ps. 76. 11.
Isai. 60. 16.
¹⁶ Ps. 22. 12.
¹⁷ 2 Sam. 8. 2, 6.
- ¹ Or, *red*. ³ Or, with *their company*. Jer. 51. 32, 33.
² Or, ye that are of the fountain of Israel. ⁴ Or, the *beasts of the reeds*. ⁵ Or, he scattereth.

they repent, He is strict in execution of chastisement.

21. But] Or, **Surely**. The "hairy scalp" means "the head thickly covered with hair" (as in the case of Absalom or Samson), indicating youth and strength.

22. The reference is not to Jehovah's people, as the A. V. interprets, but rather to His enemies, in continuation of v. 21, and in connexion with v. 23. "Though Mine enemies," He says, "hide themselves in the forests of Bashan (see v. 15), or in the depths of the sea, I will bring them back; that thou mayest slay them and dip thy foot in blood." The exact rendering is, "that thou mayest &c.; (and) the tongue of thy dogs (may have) from the enemy its portion."

24. thy goings] Again a change of subject: the description of a solemn procession to Mount Zion, visible to all men, friends and foes. The invisible train was hinted at above (v. 17).

26. from the fountain of Israel] i.e. "Bless God, ye that spring from Israel, the source of this people."

in the congregations] i.e. In full assemblies, as this day, of the people.

27. Hints descriptive of the representatives of the tribes taking part in the procession. Benjamin is named, it may be, as the tribe of Saul the first king and conqueror, in whose limits lay the Sanctuary (Deut. xxxiii. 12; Josh. xviii. 11). He is styled

"their ruler," or leader, either as ruling or leading those that take part in the procession; or, it may be, with reference to the preceding verses, and to Saul the great Benjamite chief (see 1 Sam. xiv. 47), "their conqueror." Judah is named as the tribe of David; and the words "their closely compacted company" or "council," or "stone" i.e. bulwark (Gen. xlix. 24), are added, to indicate the strength of the great tribe. Two of the northern tribes (Zebulun and Naphtali) are specified for all; perhaps in consequence of the mention of them in the Song of Deborah (Judg. v. 18).

28. i.e. "Thy God, O Israel, hath commanded (or ordained, cxxxiii. 3; Lev. xxv. 21) thy strength," i.e. thy dominion or power.

Strengthen, O God &c.] i.e. Complete the work already begun.

29. Because of &c.] i.e. "Out of respect for." Cp. marg. refl. for the fulfilment of the words. Some take "out of" in the sense of "beginning with." Thy temple at Jerusalem. Thus the idea is the same as in Luke xxiv. 47. See also cx. 2, cxxxv. 21.

30. Or, "Rebuke the beasts of the reeds (as in the marg.), the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people: each (now) submits himself with pieces of silver: He has scattered the people that delight in war" &c. The "beast of the reeds" (see Isai. xix. 6; Ezek. xxix. 3, 4) is supposed to be the

- [†] Isai. 19. 19. 31 'Princes shall come out of Egypt;
[†] Ps. 72. 9. "Ethiopia shall soon [†]stretch out her hands unto God.
 Isai. 45. 14.
 Zeph. 3. 10. 32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth;
 Acts 8. 27. O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:
[†] Ps. 44. 20. 33 To him [†]that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were*
[†] Ps. 18. 10. of old;
 & 104. 3. Lo, [†]he doth [†]send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.
 ver. 4.
[†] Ps. 29. 3. 34 [†]Ascribe ye strength unto God:
[†] Ps. 29. 1. His excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the [†]clouds.
[†] Ps. 45. 4. 35 O God, [†]thou art terrible out of thy holy places:
 & 66. 5. The God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his*
 & 76. 12. people.
 Blessed be God.

PSALM LXIX.

[†] Ps. 45, title.To the chief Musician [†]upon Shoshannim, *A Psalm* of David.

- 1 SAVE me, O God;
[†] ver. 2, 11, For [†]the waters are come in unto *my* soul.
 15. 2 [†]I sink in [†]deep mire, where *there is* no standing:
 Jonah 2. 5. I am come into [†]deep waters, where the floods overflow me.
[†] Ps. 40. 2.

¹ Heb. *give*.² Or, *heavens*.³ Heb. *the mire of depth*.⁴ Heb. *depth of waters*.

crocodile or hippopotamus, and to symbolize Egypt. The words "the bulls" are commonly interpreted of "princes," and "calves of the people" of the nations or masses. The general meaning, as above, is plain: "Threaten all such people with vengeance, unless each submits with offerings of silver."

32 &c.] The conclusion of the whole. The import of Selah (v. 7) is musical; the pitch is raised as v. 33 is sung.

33. *heavens of heavens*] *i.e.* The highest heavens (Deut. x. 14; 1 K. viii. 27), which were of old before the creation of the heavens (Gen. i. 1) which encompass the earth.

34. *Ascribe* &c.] *i.e.* "Confess the might and majesty of God seen in Israel's history, to be seen in its coming history, and reaching to heaven and earth."

35. *terrible* &c.] *i.e.* "Terrible art Thou on account of the demonstrations of Thy power which Thou sendest forth out of Thy holy places."

The faith and hope expressed briefly, but with intense earnestness, in the latter verses of this Psalm, and the confident assurance of Jehovah's future reign in Zion over all lands, seem as remarkable as the fire and brilliancy of the early portion of it. As a whole the Psalm cannot be considered as referring to Christ's kingdom: but the application to Him in the New Testament of vv. 17, 18, and the natural application to His kingdom of the latter verses, compel us to regard it as in a sense, though not the most direct, Messianic; requiring Christ and His day for its complete elucidation.

LXIX. The circumstances under which this Psalm was composed, and the character of the writer, are intimated with more than usual distinctness. It is attributed to Da-

vid in the inscription, and it bears a close resemblance to Pss. xx., xxxv., xl., xlv., and li. The coincidences with Jeremiah's history are also numerous and striking (see v. 7 note). As there is no sufficient reason for rejecting the inscription (cp. Rom. xi. 9), it must be supposed that David wrote the Psalm either immediately before, or during, his exile from Jerusalem, and that under the controlling influence of the Spirit of God his utterances were so modified as to find their true and complete fulfilment in the person of Christ, of Whom he was a type. The very numerous references to the Psalm in the New Testament leave no doubt as to its general acceptance as a Messianic Psalm in the time of our Lord; some of them distinctly attribute it to David; all assume its prophetic or typical significance. The imprecations upon the fierce and malignant enemies of God's persecuted servant bear the character of prediction, nor can their fulfilment be denied. The devout reader, who sees throughout a portraiture of Christ, under the veil of an imperfect but really typical representative, attains in all probability most nearly to the true meaning of the Psalm.

The metrical system is highly artistic, a fact nearly conclusive against the supposition of a late date; it consists of five strophes responding to each other in reverse order, with a liturgical close (vv. 35, 36).

1. *the waters are come in*] This expression appears to be metaphorical; it occurs in other Psalms, especially in those attributed by all critics to David (cp. xviii. 4, xlii. 7, lxxxviii. 7, 17).

2. The two figures in this verse give a most lively and forcible representation of

- 3 ^cI am weary of my crying: my throat is dried:
^dMine eyes fail while I wait for my God.
- 4 They that ^ehate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head:
 They that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty:
 Then I restored *that* which I took not away.
- 5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness;
 And my ¹sins are not hid from thee.
- 6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake:
 Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.
- 7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach;
 Shame hath covered my face.
- 8 ^fI am become a stranger unto my brethren,
 And an alien unto my mother's children.
- 9 ^gFor the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;
^hAnd the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.
- 10 ⁱWhen I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting,
 That was to my reproach.
- 11 I made sackcloth also my garment;
^kAnd I became a proverb to them.
- 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me;
 And ^lI *was* the song of the ²drunkards.
- 13 But ^mas for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, ⁿin an acceptable time:
- ¹ Heb. *guiltiness*. ² Heb. *drinkers of strong drink*.

^c Ps. 6. 6.
^d Ps. 119. 82, 123.
^e Isai. 38. 14.
^f Ps. 35. 19.

^g Ps. 31. 11.
^h Isai. 53. 3.
ⁱ John 1. 11.
^j & 7. 5.
^k Ps. 119. 139.
^l See Ps. 69. 50, 51.
^m Rom. 15. 3.
ⁿ Ps. 35. 13, 14.

¹ 1 K. 9. 7.
² Jer. 24. 9.
³ Job 30. 9.
⁴ Ps. 35. 15, 16.
⁵ Isai. 49. 8.
⁶ & 55. 6.
⁷ 2 Cor. 6. 2.

David (see marg. ref.), and of Him Whom David prefigured, in the hour of His desolation.

3. *wait*] See Job xiii. 15 note.

4. *They that hate me without a cause*] The quotation of these words by our Lord (John xv. 25) proves that they are applicable to the Messiah.

then I restored] See the accusation of Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 8). David had not seized the throne, as was then asserted.

5. In appealing to God the Psalmist does not, as elsewhere, assert his innocence, but simply confesses his foolishness and guilt. This is quite intelligible in the case of David, who always distinguishes carefully between his position in relation to God and to his subjects. Though blameless in his relations to his persecutors he knows that what occurs is the result and punishment of sin.

6. *be ashamed*] As they would be if one were utterly forsaken, whose sin had been pardoned, and whose repentance had been sealed by devotion to God's service. The Psalmist appeals to God's power as the "God of hosts," to His covenanted relations as the "God of Israel:" there is a world of promise in the combination of the two names.

7. The Psalmist in this and in the following verses attributes his sufferings directly to his zeal in God's service. This is one of

the reasons why the Psalm is attributed to Jeremiah (cp. Jer. xv. 15): but they are true of God's servants in all times. In the highest sense the statement is absolutely applicable to the Messiah.

8. See marg. ref. to St. John.

9. *the zeal of thine house*] Or, "jealousy for thine house." Cp. 2 K. x. 16. This evidently points to a special and extraordinary instance, or habit, of zeal, such as was shown by David and the best of his successors. It might of course be said by Jeremiah or any of the Prophets, but with far less propriety than by David. It can only be applied by a very forced construction to a Prophet writing in the Captivity when the Temple did not exist. The application to our Lord is made by St. John (ii. 17).

10-12. The feelings here described are quite in harmony with those in Psalms composed during the period of extreme depression and suffering, mental and bodily, which immediately preceded the outburst of Absalom's rebellion. One point, however, stands out here more prominently, the consciousness that the Psalmist was hated above all things because of his devotion to God's service. This portion of the Psalm has no direct bearing upon our Lord's life.

13. *They that sit in the gate*] i.e. Even the magistrates and rulers (see Job v. 4 note).

O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink:

* Ps. 144. 7.
 ° ver. 1, 2, 15. * Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of ° the deep waters.

15 Let not the waterflood overflow me,

Neither let the deep swallow me up,

And let not the pit ° shut her mouth upon me.

° Num. 16. 33.

16 Hear me, O LORD; ° for thy lovingkindness is good:

° Ps. 63. 3.

* Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

* Ps. 25. 16.
 & 86. 16.

17 And ° hide not thy face from thy servant;

For I am in trouble: ° hear me speedily.

* Ps. 27. 9.
 & 102. 2.

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it:

Deliver me because of mine enemies.

19 Thou hast known ° my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour:

Mine adversaries are all before thee.

* Ps. 22. 6.
 Isai. 53. 3.
 Heb. 12. 2.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness:

And ° I looked for some ° to take pity, but there was none;

* Ps. 142. 4.
 Isai. 63. 5.
 ° Job 16. 2.

And for ° comforters, but I found none.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat;

° And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

° Matt. 27.
 34, 48.

22 ° Let their table become a snare before them:

And that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

John 19. 29.
 ° Rom. 11. 9,
 10.

23 ° Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not;

And make their loins continually to shake.

° Isai. 6. 9.
 John 12. 39,
 40.

24 ° Pour out thine indignation upon them,

And let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Rom. 11. 10.
 2 Cor. 3. 14.

25 ° Let ° their habitation be desolate;

° 1 Thess. 2.
 16.

° Matt. 23. 38.

1 Heb. make haste to hear me.

2 Heb. to lament with me.

3 Heb. their palace.

18-21. In these verses the Psalmist describes his condition in terms which belong so completely to Him Whom he represented, as to obscure their primary application. They are but partially applicable to David, who was never abandoned by all his friends, or to Jeremiah, who found pity and warm sympathy even among the princes, or even to any Prophet under the Captivity, who found true and faithful comforters among their countrymen. The last special circumstances could only be figuratively true of any save Christ in the hour of His Passion. Cp. the marg. ref.

21. Lit., "They gave, or put, gall in my food." The word rendered "gall" includes all poisonous, or even very bitter ingredients; hence the fitness of the application to the wine mingled with gall (or myrrh) which our Saviour tasted, but would not drink.

22-26. Regarding these imprecations as simple outpourings of bitter indignation, they belong to the spirit of the Old Testament, which breathe of judgment rather than of mercy: regarding them as predictions, there can be no doubt of their fulfil-

In either case they are to be looked

upon not as utterances of Him Whom the Psalmist prefigured, but of a human soul wrought almost to madness by the triumph of cruelty and crime.

22. *their table*] An emblem of prosperity (see xxiii. 5). As they administered "gall" and "vinegar," so must they in turn know the bitterness of frustrated desires.

and that which should &c.] Or, and a trap to them in their security; i.e. while they are at ease, in a state of perfect security, let sudden destruction come upon them; just as they injured him who was at peace with them. The mind reverts naturally to the ruin brought upon our Lord's countrymen by their adherence to rites from which all life had departed.

a trap] As a wild beast grasps at food, and falls into a snare.

23. *their eyes be darkened*] Either (as in marg. ref.) an expression equivalent to darkening of the understanding; or, in retribution for their malignant joy in gazing upon the sorrows of the righteous: thus too the "shaking of the loins" (cp. Dan. v. 6; Nah. ii. 10) punishes the abuse of strength.

25. *their habitation*] The Hebrew word

- And* ¹let none dwell in their tents.
- 26 For ^athey persecute ^ehim whom thou hast smitten ;
And they talk to the grief of ²those whom thou hast wounded.
- 27 ^fAdd ³iniquity unto their iniquity :
^gAnd let them not come into thy righteousness.
- 28 Let them ^hbe blotted out of the book of the living,
ⁱAnd not be written with the righteous.
- 29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful :
Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.
- 30 ^kI will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify him with thanksgiving.
- 31 ^lThis also shall please the LORD better than an ox
Or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
- 32 ^mThe ⁴humble shall see *this*, and be glad :
And ⁿyour heart shall live that seek God.
- 33 For the LORD heareth the poor,
And despiseth not ^ohis prisoners.
- 34 ^pLet the heaven and earth praise him,
The seas, ^qand every thing that ^rmoveth therein.
- 35 ^rFor God will save Zion,
And will build the cities of Judah :
That they may dwell there, and have it in possession.
- ¹ Heb. *let there not be a dweller.* ² Heb. *thy wounded.* ⁴ Or, *weak.*
³ Or, *punishment of iniquity.* ⁵ Heb. *creepeth.*

^a See 2 Chr. 28. 9.
Zech. 1. 15.
^c Isai. 53. 4.
^f Rom. 1. 28.
^g Isai. 26. 10.
Rom. 9. 31.
^h Ex. 32. 32.
Phil. 4. 3.
Rev. 3. 5.
ⁱ Ezek. 13. 9.
Luke 10. 20.
Heb. 12. 23.
^k Ps. 28. 7.
^l Ps. 50. 13.
^m Ps. 34. 2.
ⁿ Ps. 22. 26.
^o Eph. 3. 1.
^p Ps. 96. 11.
& 148. 1.
Isai. 44. 23.
& 49. 13.
^q Isai. 55. 12
^r Ps. 51. 18.
Isai. 44. 26.

signifies specially the circular enclosure in which shepherds or nomadic tribes kept their cattle. The application to Judas by St. Peter (Acts i. 20) proceeds on the general principle that all curses of the Old Testament came in their fulness upon those in whom wickedness reached its culminating point; or it may be because Ahithophel, against whom this imprecation, if uttered by David, was probably directed, was a type of the betrayer of the Son of David.

26. These curses are strictly retributive, and as such inevitable consequences of divine justice. The wicked are to suffer above all things for their unpitying cruelty. It is observable that sufferings which are inflicted by God, and indications of His displeasure, are here represented by the Psalmist as calling for compassion and tender sympathy on the part of man.

talk to the grief] Or, "tell of the grief;" they dwell upon every detail, and recount the marks of God's anger with malignant curiosity (cp. xli. 5-8).

27. *Add iniquity unto their iniquity*] The Psalmist refers to the record of sins in God's book, which is not to be blotted out, but to be accumulated unto the day of judgment. This of course assumes the persistence of men in evil.

come into thy righteousness] The expression is somewhat peculiar. To come into God's righteousness is to be a partaker of it, whether by communication, or imputation: to be an object of sanctifying or justifying grace. In this passage the latter effect is undoubtedly that which the Psalmist con-

templates. He prays that being unconverted they should not be dealt with as righteous, or suffered to prosper and to escape punishment.

28. The "book of the living" includes all who are preserved in this life by the divine goodness; who not only live, but are deemed worthy to live. The figure may be taken from the register in which the names of all citizens were enrolled.

29. His enemies, so proud and prosperous, will be brought low; but he, being lowly and afflicted, prays that he may be exalted.

31. Or, *And it shall please the Lord better than an ox, a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.* The horns mark the age of the bullock, not under three years, the hoofs its ceremonial cleanness, thus together representing the most perfect offering ordained by the Law (cp. Lev. xi. 3).

32. The verse may be rendered, *The humble have seen it, and they will rejoice; let your heart live, ye who seek the Lord.*

33. *his prisoners*] Those who suffer imprisonment, or generally, oppression and persecution for His sake.

35. *will save Zion*] The natural inference from this verse is that Zion is in danger, and that the cities of Judah are destroyed; a combination which points to the time of Jeremiah, who, however, at the very time when he is supposed to have written this Psalm, foretold the destruction of Zion. On the other hand, the wish that God may build the cities of Judah, complete and secure them, and grant them for a permanent

- * Ps. 102. 23. 36 *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it:
And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

PSALM LXX.

- * Ps. 38, title. To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David,* to bring to remembrance.
- * Ps. 71. 12. 1 *MAKE haste*, 'O God, to deliver me;
Make haste 'to help me, O LORD.
- * Ps. 35. 4, 23. 2 ^bLet them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul:
& 71. 13. Let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire
my hurt.
- * Ps. 40. 15. 3 ^cLet them be turned back for a reward of their shame
That say, Aha, aha.
- 4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee:
And let such as love thy salvation say continually,
Let God be magnified.
- * Ps. 40. 17. 5 ^dBut I *am* poor and needy: ^emake haste unto me, O God:
* Ps. 141. 1. Thou *art* my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, make no tarrying.

PSALM LXXI.

- * Ps. 25. 2, 3. 1 IN ^athee, O LORD, do I put my trust:
& 31. 1. Let me never be put to confusion.
- * Ps. 31. 1. 2 ^bDeliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape:
* Ps. 17. 6. ^cIncline thine ear unto me, and save me.
- * Ps. 31. 2, 3. 3 ^dBe thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually
resort:
* Ps. 44. 4. Thou hast given ^ecommandment to save me;
For thou *art* my rock and my fortress.
- * Ps. 140. 1, 4. 4 ^fDeliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
- * Jer. 17. 7, 17. 5 For thou *art* ^gmy hope, O LORD GOD:
Thou art my trust from my youth.
- * Ps. 22. 9, 10. 6 ^hBy thee have I been holden up from the womb:
Isai. 46. 3. Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels:
My praise *shall* be continually of thee.
- * Isai. 8. 18. 7 ⁱI am as a wonder unto many;—but thou *art* my strong refuge.
Zech. 3. 8. 8 Let ^kmy mouth be filled *with* thy praise
1 Cor. 4. 9. *And with* thy honour all the day.
* Ps. 35. 28.

¹ Heb. *to my help*.² Heb. *Be thou to me for a rock of habitation*.

possession to His people, is one which befits a patriotic king, and may without incongruity be assigned to David.

LXX. This is taken with little variation from Psalm xl. 13 &c. The name Elohim is substituted in most places, but not throughout, for Jehovah. From the inscription it may perhaps be inferred that it was used by the Psalmist when he brought a legal meat-offering to the Altar. It is quite uncertain whether this Psalm was separated from the context and arranged for liturgical use by David, or by a later composer.

LXXI. This Psalm has in the Septuagint version the title, "A Psalm of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who

were first led captive." This probably means that it was composed by David, but used as especially suitable to their own condition by the Rechabites, and by the Jews of the Captivity. It is full of reminiscences, or direct quotations of other Psalms, especially the xxiind, xxxvth, and xlth; and is supposed to have been a compilation by a later writer. The date and authorship are wholly uncertain. It consists of two parts, vv. 1-11, 12-24.

3. *my strong habitation*] Or, as marg., *i.e.* a stronghold on a rock. The figure is common in the Davidic Psalms.

7. *a wonder*] A marvellous example of God's punishments. Thus Job was looked upon by his friends. See also marg. *reff.*

- 9 ¹Cast me not off in the time of old age;
Forsake me not when my strength faileth. ¹ ver. 18.
- 10 For mine enemies speak against me;
And they that ¹lay wait for my soul ^mtake counsel together, ^m 2 Sam. 17. 1
Matt. 27. 1.
- 11 Saying, God hath forsaken him:
Persecute and take him; for *there is none to deliver him.*
- 12 ⁿO God, be not far from me:
O my God, ^omake haste for my help. ⁿ Ps. 22. 11,
10.
& 35. 22.
& 38. 21.
^o Ps. 70. 1.
^p ver. 24.
Ps. 35. 4, 26.
& 40. 14.
& 70. 2.
- 13 ^pLet them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to
my soul;
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my
hurt.
- 14 But I will hope continually,
And will yet praise thee more and more.
- 15 ^qMy mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation
all the day;
For ^rI know not the numbers *thereof*. ^q ver. 8. 24.
Ps. 35. 28.
^r Ps. 40. 5.
& 139. 17, 18.
- 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God:
I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.
- 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth:
And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
- 18 ^sNow also ²when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake ^s ver. 9.
me not;
Until I have shewed ³thy strength unto *this* generation,
And thy power to every one *that is to come*.
- 19 ^tThy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, ^t Ps. 57. 10.
Who hast done great things:
^uO God, who *is* like unto thee!
- 20 ^z*Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles,
^vShalt quicken me again,
And shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. ^u Ps. 35. 10.
& 86. 8.
& 89. 6, 8.
^w Ps. 60. 3.
^v Hos. 6. 1, 2.
- 21 Thou shalt increase my greatness,
And comfort me on every side.
- 22 I will also praise thee ⁴*z* with the psaltery,
Even thy truth, O my God:
Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou ^aHoly One of
Israel. ^z Ps. 92. 1,
2, 3.
& 150. 3.
^a 2 K. 19. 22.
Isai. 60. 9.
- 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee;
And ^bmy soul, which thou hast redeemed. ^b Ps. 103. 4.
- 24 ^cMy tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day
long:
For ^dthey are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, ^c ver. 8. 15.
^d ver. 13.
that seek my hurt.

¹ Heb. *watch*, or, *observe*.² Heb. *unto old age and grey hairs*.³ Heb. *thine arm*.⁴ Heb. *with the instrument of psaltery*.

9. *old age*] The latter years of David's life were prosperous, but visited by an affliction severe enough to give occasion to these lamentations (see 2 Sam. xxiv).

15. *thy righteousness*] The attribute on which all hope of salvation depends. God's righteousness is the sole (v. 16) pledge not only of His accepting the righteous, but of His adherence to His promises of mercy and forgiveness to penitents.

18. *thy strength*] Lit. as marg., i.e. the manifestation or putting forth of the divine power.

19. *who is like unto thee*] The motto of the Maccabees. Cp. also marg. ref.

22. *Holy One of Israel*] A name of God very often used by Isaiah, but which occurs twice only in the Psalms. Jeremiah also uses it twice.

PSALM LXXII.

A Psalm ¹* for Solomon.* Ps. 127,
title.^a Isai. 11.

2, 3, 4.

& 32. 1.

^b Ps. 85. 10.

Isai. 32. 17.

& 52. 7.

^c Isai. 11. 4.^d ver. 7. 17.

Ps. 89. 33. 37.

^e Hos. 6. 3.^f Dan. 2. 44.

Luke 1. 33.

^g See Ex. 23.

31.

1 K. 4. 21, 24.

Ps. 80. 11.

& 89. 25.

Zech. 9. 10.

^h Ps. 74. 14.ⁱ Isai. 40. 23.

Mic. 7. 17.

^k 2 Chr. 9. 21.

Ps. 45. 12.

& 68. 29.

Isai. 49. 7.

& 60. 6, 9.

- 1 GIVE the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
- 2 ^aHe shall judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with judgment.
- 3 ^bThe mountains shall bring peace to the people,
And the little hills, by righteousness.
- 4 ^cHe shall judge the poor of the people,
He shall save the children of the needy,
And shall break in pieces the oppressor.
- 5 They shall fear thee ^das long as the sun
And moon endure, throughout all generations.
- 6 ^eHe shall come down like rain upon the mown grass :
As showers *that* water the earth.
- 7 In his days shall the righteous flourish ;
^fAnd abundance of peace ^gso long as the moon endureth.
- 8 ^hHe shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the river unto the ends of the earth.
- 9 ⁱThey that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him ;
^jAnd his enemies shall lick the dust.
- 10 ^kThe kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents :

1 Or, *of*.^g Heb. *till* there be *no moon*.

LXXII. This Psalm, attributed in the inscription to Solomon, bears strong indications of his authorship : the style resembles that of the Proverbs, and is different from the Davidic Psalms : the allusion to distant lands, to an extended and peaceful dominion, and a certain air of calm and cheerful reflection, are characteristic of the son of David. It was probably composed early in the king's reign for liturgical recitation, giving expression to loyal and devout aspirations, connected with the head of the Theocratic kingdom. Hence the Messianic tone which pervades the whole : the author felt himself to be the representative of the ideal and future Messiah ; his prayers and hopes reach far beyond his own sphere ; they are fulfilled only in Christ. This Psalm is thus the culminating point of that portion of Messianic prophecy which sets forth the kingly office of the Saviour.

[*for Solomon*] Lit., "to Solomon;" the same form as in the inscriptions of Psalms assigned to David. Here it probably marks authorship (see Introduction, p. 97).

1. *the king*] *i.e.* "the King Messiah," according to the Targum, representing the old Hebrew tradition.

thy righteousness] The righteousness, which belongs to the kingly office, is thus represented as a communication of the divine attribute. The Psalmist sees in the king's son the recipient and channel of all righteousness ; hence the application to Christ. Solomon naturally lays stress on this point : the promises made to David had special reference to his son.

3. "The mountains" and "hills" repre-

sent the whole land, of which they are the most prominent objects. The whole country will overflow with the peace which is the result of righteousness.

5. *fear thee*] *i.e.* God. True religion will be the permanent result of righteous government.

6. Solomon refers to, and adopts, David's description of the righteous ruler (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 4).

7. Lit. as in the marg. This passage is important as showing that the idea of a King whose reign should last to the end of time was distinctly present to the Psalmist's mind. It determines the Messianic character of the whole composition. Cp. Isai. ii. 4.

8. The extension of the Israelite realm under David and Solomon was sufficient to suggest the hope, and might be regarded by the Psalmist as a pledge of its realization, but taken in connexion with the preceding verses this declaration is strictly Messianic. [*from the river*] The Euphrates ; to which the sovereignty of Solomon over tributary peoples extended ; but that limit was but the commencement of the dominion which the ideal King would exercise over the whole world (cp. ii. 8).

10. Tarshish and the isles represent the west, of which vague but impressive accounts were brought to Palestine by the Phœnicians, whose commerce at that time extended to the south-west of England. Sheba, in Arabia, and Seba (*i.e.* Meroe, according to Josephus), represent the nations of Asia and Africa. Cp. 1 K. x. 1, and Gen. x. 7 notes.

- The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
- 11 'Yea, all kings shall fall down before him :
All nations shall serve him. ¹ Isai. 49. 22, 23.
- 12 For ^{he} shall deliver the needy when he crieth ;
The poor also, and *him* that hath no helper. ^m Job 29. 12.
- 13 He shall spare the poor and needy,
And shall save the souls of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence :
And ^{precious} shall their blood be in his sight. ⁿ Ps. 116. 15.
- 15 And he shall live, and to him ^{shall} be given of the gold of Sheba :
Prayer also shall be made for him continually ;
And daily shall he be praised.
- 16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ;
The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon :
^o And *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. ^o 1 K. 4. 20.
- 17 ^p His name ^{shall} endure for ever :
^q His name shall be continued as long as the sun : ^p Ps. 89. 36.
And ^{men} shall be blessed in him :
^r All nations shall call him blessed. ^q Gen. 12. 3. & 22. 18. Jer. 4. 2. ^r Luke 1. 48. ^s 1 Chr. 29. 10. Ps. 41. 13. & 106. 48. ^t Ex. 15. 11. Ps. 77. 14. & 136. 4. ^u Neh. 9. 5. ^v Num. 14. 21. Zech. 14. 9.
- 18 ^{Blessed} be the LORD God, the God of Israel,
^{Who} only doeth wondrous things.
- 19 And ^{blessed} be his glorious name for ever :
^{And} let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory ; Amen, and Amen.
- 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.
- ¹ Heb. one shall give.
² Heb. shall be. ³ Heb. shall be as a son to continue his father's name for ever.

offer gifts] In token of subjection ; all powers of the earth will be tributary to the King.

12. *For*] The extension of the King's dominion is thus the result not of military force, but of moral influence ; all nations will be won by the righteousness of His sway, more especially by His care for the poor and afflicted. Jewish anticipations of the Messianic epoch are not therefore in accordance with the plain statements of Hebrew prophecy.

13. *the poor and needy*] Or, **the weak and needy**.

14. As King He will be merciful and just ; as Saviour He will redeem them with His own precious Blood.

15. *he shall live*] "He" *i.e.* the "poor" (17. 12, 13), the representative of those delivered by the righteousness of the King, and by His goodness made rich. In grateful acknowledgement he brings costly gifts "of the gold of Sheba," prays for the King's prosperity, and blesses His name unceasingly.

16. Or, **May there be abundance of corn in the land, on the top of mountains.**

There are traces of cultivation extending up the terraced sides to the summit of the

mountains of Palestine—a well-known evidence of former prosperity.

the fruit &c.] The ripened corn on the heights shall shake (or rustle) in the wind like the foliage on Lebanon.

On the rapid increase of a regenerate people in Messianic times, see cx. 3 ; Isai. ix. 3, xlix. 20.

17. Or, "May His name be for ever." This is at once a prayer and a prophecy.

his name &c.] Or, "may his name be renewed so long as the sun shineth" : *i.e.* His name will produce a new progeny, will be continued by every renewed race.

and men shall be blessed] Lit. shall bless themselves. This implies a consciousness and recognition of the blessing.

20. This verse marks the close of the collection which contains at least sixty Psalms ascribed to David, and which probably bore as a formal designation, "The Prayers of David." The title "David the son of Jesse" recalls his "last words" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1) ; it was evidently here, as in that passage, assumed by the king himself, both in memory of his comparatively humble origin, and of the meaning of the name Jesse, or Yishai ("Jah is living").

PSALM LXXIII.

* Ps. 50,
title.¹ A Psalm of *Asaph.^a Ps. 37. 1,
Jer. 12. 1.^b Job 21. 9.

- 1 ²TRULY God is good to Israel,
Even to such as are ³of a clean heart.
2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone;
My steps had well nigh slipped.
3 ^aFor I was envious at the foolish,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4 For *there are no bands in their death*;
But their strength is ⁴firm.
5 ^bThey are not ⁵in trouble as other men;
Neither are they plagued ⁶like other men.
6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain;

¹ Or, *A Psalm for Asaph.*³ Heb. *clean of heart.*⁵ Heb. *in the trouble of other men.*² Or, *Yef.*⁴ Heb. *fat.*⁶ Heb. *with.*

LXXIII.-LXXXIX. The Psalms in this book differ in some important points from the preceding. Eleven are attributed to Asaph, four to the sons of Korah, one to Ethan, and one only to David. Their character is for the most part didactic, grave, solemn, and sententious. They contain at once the most harrowing descriptions of national calamities, and the clearest anticipations of a futurity of blessedness. It is observable that from the xliind to the lxxivth Psalms the name Elohim is used almost exclusively. This is conclusive against the assumption that such an usage indicates an early date, for these Psalms, with very few exceptions, belong to the post-Davidic period, and are even assigned in part by some critics to a far later age.

LXXIII. This Psalm may have been composed by Asaph, the contemporary of David, but the name appears to have been borne by some of his descendants. The indications of date are uncertain. The apostacy of which the Psalmist speaks is rather moral than ceremonial; the unbelief was practical atheism rather than heathensuperstition. The sanctuary is still standing (v. 17); the belief in a future retribution is definite (v. 24). The language is archaic, and the style somewhat obscure, resembling to some extent the Book of Job, with which the author was evidently familiar. Upon the whole it appears most probable that we have here a product of the Solomonian age, written at a season when a turbulent and corrupt nobility had the upper hand, and vicious habits were taking deep root in the nation. A few years before the death of Solomon, or the period immediately following the accession of his son, would supply abundant materials for such reflections.

1. *Truly*] Or, *Verily* (as in v. 13). The word indicates the result of a mental struggle, of doubts satisfied, and obstinate questionings silenced.

to such as are of a clean heart] Or, *to the pure in heart*. Cp. Matt. v. 8. God reveals

His goodness on this condition. Sin is the mist which intercepts the light and warmth of His Presence.

2. An admirable description of the effects of evil influence. The Psalmist is like a man standing on slippery ground, and scarcely able to retain his footing against a rushing stream: he was all but borne along by the current of popular opinion.

3. *envious*] The cardinal temptation. Cp. Job xxi. 7, where the feeling is brought out with its results.

the foolish] i.e. Empty boasters, fools exulting in their impiety (see v. 5 note).

the prosperity] Lit., "the peace." The trial consisted in seeing the boastfulness of the wicked apparently justified by their security and success.

4. *no bands*] This is generally understood to mean, the wicked go through no severe struggles, mental or bodily, at their death; they die easily, without fear or pain. Cp. Job xxi. 13. Of all trials to the observer that of a peaceful, fearless death ending a life of wickedness is the severest. It has probably caused more fallings away than any other, and would naturally present itself first to the Psalmist's spirit.

firm] Lit. as in the margin, but "firm" expresses the real meaning; their body is sound, unbroken by disease or suffering to the very hour of death. Cp. Luke xvi. 19, 22.

5. Or, *They have no part in the trouble of men, nor are they plagued with other men*. Even in times of national calamities and visitations they seem exempt; famine and disease carry off the poor, while the rich oppressor is living in luxury. This points to a period of general suffering, not due to foreign invasion, but such as is described by Amos (vi. 1-6) and Isaiah (ii. 7); such as probably preceded the death of Solomon, when the people were well-nigh exhausted by exactions, which brought about the revolution after his death.

6. *a chain*] The gold chain, indicating

Violence covereth them *as a garment*.

7 ^aTheir eyes stand out with fatness :

¹They have more than heart could wish.

8 ^eThey are corrupt, and ^fspeak wickedly concerning oppression :
They ^gspeak loftily.

9 They set their mouth ^hagainst the heavens,
And their tongue walketh through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return hither :

ⁱAnd waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

11 And they say, ^kHow doth God know ?

And is there knowledge in the most High ?

12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly,
Who ^lprosper in the world ; they increase *in* riches.

13 ^mVerily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain,
And ⁿwashed my hands *in* innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued,
And ^ochastened every morning.

15 If I say, I will speak thus ;

Behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.

16 ^pWhen I thought to know this,—^qit *was* too painful for me ;

17 Until ^rI went into the sanctuary of God ;

Then understood I ^stheir end.

¹ Heb. *they pass the thoughts of the heart.*

² Heb. *my chastisement was.*

³ Heb. *it was labour in mine eyes.*

^c So Ps. 109.

18.

^d Job 15. 27.

Ps. 17. 10.

& 119. 70.

Jer. 5. 28.

^e Ps. 53. 1.

^f Hos. 7. 16.

^g 2 Pet. 2. 19.

^h Rev. 13. 6.

ⁱ Ps. 75. 8.

^k Job 22. 13.

Ps. 10. 11.

& 94. 7.

^l ver. 3.

^m Job 21. 15.

& 34. 9.

& 35. 3.

Mal. 3. 14.

ⁿ Ps. 26. 6.

^o Eccles. 8.

17.

^p Ps. 77. 13.

^q Ps. 37. 38.

the rank ~~of~~ the noble, and symbolizing his pride. Pride is thus reckless.

garment] The long robe bright with colours and embroidery is an apt symbol of the luxurious nobility living on the spoils of an oppressed people.

7. *stand out with fatness*] The projecting eyes of the full-fed oppressor completes the picture.

they have more than heart could wish] Or, *the imaginations of their heart overflow*, i.e. all their words express without restraint or shame the inward imaginings of hearts full of wickedness. The word rendered "imaginations" is used of figures painted or carved on walls, especially of heathen temples (Lev. xxvi. 1 ; Ezek. viii. 12) ; "idolatrous fancies" would express the true sense.

8. Or, *They sneer, and speak wickedly of oppression* &c. There is no disguise, no hypocrisy, no shame or fear ; what they think they say, they exult in their crimes : they see in them proofs of superiority to men.

9. The boasting has two objects ; against heaven it takes the form of blasphemy, against man that of threatening or calumny (cp. Job i. 7).

10. Or, *Therefore his (or my) people turn hither, and full waters are swallowed by them*. The meaning appears to be, the people, corrupted by their example and boasts, run after them and imbibed all their principles without hesitation. Cp. Job xv. 16.

11. The result is open disbelief in God's

providence. The success of wickedness, if permanent as they hold it to be, is incompatible with faith in His knowledge and power.

12. This verse expresses the result of mere outward observation. *Behold these are wicked and (yet) prosperous for ever, they increase in strength*. The Psalmist presents the problem broadly, in the same spirit which breathes in the Book of Job. On the one side a godless race of nobles, without shame or misgiving, surrounded by abject followers ; on the other, innocence, not only unrequited, but suffering afflictions, such as throughout the Old Testament are especially attributed to Divine wrath.

13. *I will speak thus*] i.e. Declare that such is the real state of things in the world.

offend] Rather, "I should have betrayed," "dealt unfaithfully with."

When I thought] The Psalmist first by meditation tried to discover a rational account of the anomalies in the world's government, but the attempt resulted in nothing but sinful as well as melancholy thoughts, such for instance as were entertained by Job, and not overcome without a Divine revelation.

17. In the calmness of the sacred Courts, and in answer to prayer, the Psalmist found the solution which no effort of thought could attain.

Their end] Their after destiny, their ultimate portion. Up to the end of their life (v. 4) they are supposed to be prosperous.

- * Ps. 35. 6. 18 Surely *thou didst set them in slippery places:
Thou castedst them down into destruction.
- 19 How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
- * Job 20. 8. 20 *As a dream when *one* awaketh;
Ps. 90. 5. So, O Lord, 'when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their
Isai. 29. 7, 8. image.
* Ps. 78. 65.
- * ver. 3. 21 Thus my heart was "grieved,—and I was pricked in my reins.
- * Ps. 92. 6. 22 *So foolish was I, and 'ignorant:
Prov. 30. 2. I was as a beast ²before thee.
- 23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee:
Thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.
- * Ps. 32. 8. 24 *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
Isai. 58. 8. And afterward receive me to glory.
- * Phil. 3. 8. 25 *Whom have I in heaven *but thee*?
And *there* is none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee.
- * Ps. 84. 2. 26 "My flesh and my heart faileth:
& 119. 81. But God is the ³strength of my heart, and ²my portion for ever.
* Ps. 16. 5. 27 For, lo, 'they that are far from thee shall perish:
& 119. 57. Thou hast destroyed all them that ⁴go a whoring from thee.
* Ps. 119. 155. 28 But *it* is good for me to ⁴draw near to God:
* Ex. 34. 15.
Num. 15. 39.
Jam. 4. 4.
* Heb. 10. 22. ¹ Heb. *I knew not.* ² Heb. *with thee.* ³ Heb. *rock.*

The retribution must therefore be after death, or not at all. In the three following verses five points are enumerated, in which the Psalmist finds a proof of Divine judgment.

18. *slippery places*] They seem to stand, but have no hold.

destruction] When they fall, their ruin is absolute, without hope of recovery. Cp. lxxiv. 3.

19. *in a moment*] Their ruin is sudden, comes on them without warning.

consumed with terrors] The terrors are not mere alarms, with the horror comes destruction.

20. *awakest*] Or, *arise*st. God arises to manifest His justice (cp. marg. ref.).

their image] A fine expression, denoting the shadowy, unsubstantial character of that outward show which had disturbed the Psalmist; the word is especially applied to idols.

Strictly speaking, all these points describe simply the destruction, death and ruin of the guilty; but they involve the thought that there is an absolute difference between their fate and that of the righteous; and inasmuch as that difference cannot consist merely in the termination of existence, it must needs refer to the state after death. In the Old Testament we have no distinct notice of a futurity of agony appointed to the wicked, but we have here a vision of hopelessness, horror, and contempt (a thought afterwards developed in Dan. xii. 2). The word "image" implies a continued, though unsubstantial, existence; the form of the man will remain, though, divested of all that disguised its misery and corruption,

it will be an object of "everlasting contempt." A future judgment with everlasting issues, if not declared, is implicitly contained in this passage.

21, 22. The Psalmist now reviews and condemns his hasty thoughts: **When my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins, then I was foolish and ignorant, I was a brute before Thee.** The word "was grieved" implies a state of ferment, of diseased excitement, and disturbance: "was pricked," pierced as with the sharp fang of an adder.

23. The state of the righteous in its contrast. He is with God continually, and therefore in no real danger; God holds him up, so that he cannot slip; through life he is guided; and then received into glory, to the manifestation of that abiding Presence, which even here sustains, preserves and guides the faithful.

25. The ground of hope is present faith. The Psalmist has but one object in heaven or earth: giving his heart wholly to God, he has Him wholly as his portion.

26. This verse contains a strong assertion of personal immortality; given the destruction of the body with all its powers, the heart with all its faculties and endowments, yet the destruction is but seeming, for God will preserve or restore that nature in which personality and perpetuity of consciousness consist, and He will be the portion of the believer for ever.

28. *But it is good for me*] Or, **And as for me, nearness to God is my good.**

The sum total amounts to this; the prosperity of the wicked may, or may not, last till death, but it is a mere phantom, ending

I have put my trust in the Lord God,
That I may ^fdeclare all thy works.

^f Ps. 107. 22.
& 118. 17.

PSALM LXXIV.

¹ Maschil of Asaph.

- 1 O GOD, why hast thou ^acast us off for ever?
Why doth thine anger ^bsmoke against ^cthe sheep of thy pasture?
- 2 Remember thy congregation, ^d*which* thou hast purchased of
old;
The ^erod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed;
This mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.
- 3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations;
Even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.
- 4 ^fThine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations;
^g*They set up their ensigns for signs.*
- 5 *A man* was famous according as he had lifted up
Axes upon the thick trees.

^a Ps. 44. 9.
& 60. 1, 10.
& 77. 7.
^b Jer. 31. 37.
^c Deut. 29. 20.
^d Ps. 95. 7.
& 100. 3.
^e Ex. 15. 16.
Deut. 9. 20.
^f Deut. 32. 9.
Jer. 10. 16.
^g Lam. 2. 7.
^h Dan. 6. 27.

¹ Or, A Psalm for Asaph to give instruction.

² Or, *tribe*.

here in nothingness, and followed by everlasting shame; the life of the righteous is a journey under sure guidance, lighted by God's Presence, and issuing in glory, with an entire fruition of blessedness for ever.

LXXIV. This Psalm is closely connected with the lxxixth, and appears to have been composed at the same time, with reference to the same events. Commentators, however, are at issue, some assigning it to the period of the Chaldean invasion, others to the time of the Maccabees; both of which views contain considerable difficulties. A third supposition seems to be less open to objection. The invasion of Palestine by the Egyptian Shishak took place in the reign of Rehoboam (1 K. xiv. 25, 26; 2 Chr. xii. 2-9 notes). The extent of that invasion, and its duration, are illustrated by the inscription on the south wall of the temple of Karnak, which Shishak set up on his return. That such an invasion should not be noticed by any of the Psalmists seems improbable; and the expressions used in this Psalm are suitable to the transactions which must have accompanied it.

The structure, like that of other Psalms attributed to the elder Asaph, is highly artistic.

Maschil] See Ps. xxxii. inscription.

1. *why... for ever*] Two questions are combined, why God should have cast off His people? whether it is for ever? The Psalmist fears that the desolation will be perpetual.

the sheep of thy pasture] An expression common in the Psalms of Asaph (see lxxvii. 20, lxxviii. 52, lxxix. 13). There may be a reference to the time when God led His people like sheep (out of Egypt) by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

2. Three points are urged which have a special suitability if pleaded in consequence of the Egyptian invasion; the purchase, or rather the acquisition, of the congregation

(see marg. ref.); the special redemption of the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 8-10); and the choice of Mount Zion for God's dwelling. It is evident that this clause could not have been written at the time of the exile: the Psalmist speaks as an eye-witness and as an inhabitant of Zion — "*this mount Zion*."

3. God is intreated to stand as a deliverer, or restorer, upon the ruins, which but for His interposition would be perpetual. Buildings connected with the Temple had been overthrown: but the havoc, though great, did not amount to a total destruction. The terms are stronger than can be justified by the notices of damage in the time of the Maccabees, and hardly strong enough for the total destruction of the Temple by the Chaldees. That Shishak, who both as belonging to a family of priests, and as the ally of Jeroboam (see 1 K. xi. 40), would feel a special enmity to the Sanctuary of Judah, and have committed great havoc when he plundered the Temple, is highly probable: it accords with the practice of the Egyptians, who mutilated the fanes of hostile deities.

4. *thy congregations*] Or, *Thy place of meeting*; it means specially the Holy precinct between the Tabernacle and the Altar: see Ex. xxix. 43 note.

their ensigns for signs] Or, *their own signs for signs*. The enemies set up their standards as symbols of their religion. This might of course be applied to the time of Antiochus (1 Macc. i. 30-59) or to the Chaldees; but it is equally probable in the case of Shishak.

5. The verse is obscure, but it may be rendered, "Each man was seen as if plying aloft hatchets in a copse of wood:" and denotes the wild, fierce gestures of men cutting down the woodwork of the Temple, either in wanton devastation, or in order to carry off the golden decorations.

- ^a 1 K. 6.
18, 29, 32, 35.
- ² 2 K. 25. 9.
- ³ Ps. 89. 39.
- ⁴ Ps. 83. 4.
- ^m 1 Sam.
3. 1.
Amos 8. 11.
- ⁵ Lam. 2. 3.
- ⁶ Ps. 44. 4.
- ⁷ Ex. 14. 21.
- ⁸ Isai. 51. 9.
Ezek. 29. 3.
- 6 But now they break down ^athe carved work thereof
At once with axes and hammers.
- 7 ¹They have cast fire into thy sanctuary,
They have defiled ^bby casting down the dwelling place of thy
name to the ground.
- 8 ¹They said in their hearts, Let us ²destroy them together :
They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.
- 9 We see not our signs :—^mthere is no more any prophet :
Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.
- 10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach ?
Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever ?
- 11 ⁿWhy withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand ?
Pluck it out of thy bosom.
- 12 For ^oGod is my King of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
- 13 ^pThou didst ³divide the sea by thy strength :
^qThou breakest the heads of the ⁴dragons in the waters.
- 14 Thou breakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,

¹ Heb. *They have sent thy sanctuary into the fire.*

² Heb. *break.*
³ Heb. *break.*

⁴ Or, *whales.*

6. Or, And now they batter down the carvings thereof altogether with hatchets and hammers. The thorough mutilation of figures, inscriptions, and decorations is characteristic of Egyptians.

7. *they have cast &c.* Some prefer, "They have cast thy holy things into the fire on the ground," connecting the words "to the ground" with the preceding clause; the holy things cast into the fire upon the ground in the Courts of the Temple, caused a defilement of the dwelling-place of Jehovah.

8. The word rendered "synagogues" is the same as "congregations" in v. 4. *i.e.* places of meeting the Lord. No notice of synagogues in or out of Jerusalem is found before the Captivity; no certain notice in the time of the Maccabees. It is, however, certain that "holy places," consecrated by ancient associations, and not condemned by God's Law so long or so far as they were used aright, existed in various parts of Palestine, the most striking instance being that of Gibeon. That the Egyptians actually besieged and captured more than one of these places is testified by the contemporaneous inscription at Thebes; that they burnt or devastated them is more than probable. That Asaph, the later contemporary of Solomon, should have used it of Gibeon, or other holy places, or rather should have put it into the mouth of foreign invaders, is natural and probable. Cp. the words of Rabshakeh (2 K. xviii. 22).

9. *We see not our signs* A reference to v. 4. Instead of their own signs, whether standards (as in Num. ii.) or sacred emblems, the Israelites see those of triumphant enemies. This is well suited to the state of the people after the capture of Jerusalem by Chaldees or Egyptians.

there is no more &c.] The complaint may imply either a total cessation of Prophets, or, according to a common Hebrew idiom, the withholding of a special communication declaring "how long" the infliction should last. The former alternative seems scarcely admissible: the second is more probable; the withholding for a season of the knowledge "how long" was a common feature of severe visitations. In the case of Judah under Rehoboam it was specially deserved (cp. 1 K. xiv. 24, 25; 2 Chr. xii. 2). The want of knowledge was an appropriate chastisement for a king who had rejected wise counsels at the outset of his reign. It is also clear from 2 Chr. xii. 8 that the servitude was to last an indefinite time.

11. *pluck it out of thy bosom* *i.e.* Put forth Thy right hand and destroy by one blow.

12. *my King of old*] The reference to ancient mercies has a special suitableness, assuming the Egyptian invasion to be meant. It introduces a series of direct allusions to the discomfiture of Pharaoh in the Exodus; and is an appeal that that great deliverance may now be repeated.

13. *divide*] Or, *cleave*; a violent action is described. In marg. ref. a different word is used. The Psalmist is specially concerned with the suddenness and vehemence of the act.

dragons] Or, sea-monsters; the well-known symbols of Egypt (see Ex. vii. 9 note).

14. *leviathan* *i.e.* The crocodile (see Job xli. 1). Symbolically (as in Isai. xxvii. 1) it represents the Egyptian host crushed by the divine power, and cast on the shores of the Red Sea. This application to Egypt would be peculiarly suitable if it were first made on the occasion of an Egyptian occupation of Jerusalem.

- And gavest him ^ato be meat ^ato the people inhabiting the wilderness.*
- 15 *'Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood :
^aThou driedst up ^amighty rivers.*
- 16 *The day is thine, the night also is thine :
^aThou hast prepared the light and the sun.*
- 17 *Thou hast ^aset all the borders of the earth :
^aThou hast ^amade summer and winter.*
- 18 *"Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD,
 And that ^bthe foolish people have blasphemed thy name.*
- 19 *O deliver not the soul ^cof thy turtle dove unto the multitude of
 the wicked :
^dForget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*
- 20 *'Have respect unto the covenant :
 For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of
 cruelty.*
- 21 *O let not the oppressed return ashamed :
 Let the poor and needy praise thy name.*
- 22 *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause :
^eRemember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.*
- 23 *Forget not the voice of thine enemies :
 The tumult of those that rise up against thee ^fincreaseth con-
 tinually.*

^a Num. 14. 9.
^a Ps. 72. 9.

^c Ex. 17. 5, 6.
 Num. 20. 11.
 Ps. 105. 41.
 Isai. 48. 21.

^d Josh. 3.
 13, &c.
^e Gen. 1. 14.
^f Acts 17. 26.
^f Gen. 8. 22.

^a ver. 22.
 Rev. 16. 19.
^b Ps. 39. 8.
^c Cant. 2. 14.

^d Ps. 68. 10.
^e Lev. 26. 44.
^f Ps. 108. 45.
 Jer. 33. 21.

^f ver. 18.
 Ps. 89. 51.

PSALM LXXV.

To the chief Musician, ** Al-taschith, A Psalm or Song ^aof Asaph.

- 1 UNT^o thee, O God, do we give thanks,
 Unto thee do we give thanks: for *that* thy name is near

¹ Heb. *rivers of strength.*

² Heb. *made them.*

³ Heb. *ascendeth*, Jonah
 1. 2.

⁴ Or, *Destroy not.*
⁵ Or, *for Asaph.*

^a Ps. 57,
 titlo.

to the people inhabiting the wilderness] The A. V. follows the old interpretation, which refers this to the Israelites. Later commentators understand the expression to mean wild beasts which devoured the carcasses.

16. From the recapitulation of past mercies Asaph turns to the contemplation of God's power as Creator; and as such opposed to, and Lord over, all the agencies which the heathen, especially the Egyptians, personified and worshipped.

the light and the sun] The first word means "light-bearer"; the word "sun" follows as the principal luminary. There is probably an allusion to the worship of the sun, which is thus declared to be a creature of God. In the Egyptian Ritual, Tum, the Sun-God, declares himself to be self-existent. Some take the light-bearer to be the moon.

18. *the foolish people*] Corrupt and ungodly sinners (see Job ii. 10 note).

19. *turtle dove*] See marg. ref. The figure has a special suitableness in the mouth of one trained under Solomon. It favours the mystical or spiritual interpretation of that passage.

The general sense of the verse is clear; but the reading is disputed. Some render "Give not up to violence the life of Thy

turtle-dove: forget not for ever the life of Thy poor." Others, following the ancient Versions, "Give not over Thy turtle-dove to the wild beasts," or "to a tribe of greediness."

20. *unto the covenant*] See Gen. xvii. 7, 8; the reference is peculiarly suitable when the Psalmist apprehends captivity, or loss of the possession of Canaan given to the seed of Abraham for an everlasting possession.

the dark places] The heathen land where the Israelites had been, or feared to be, in bondage. There is also a reference to Egypt, the iron furnace, the house of spiritual darkness and misery through cruelty or unjust violence.

23. *increaseth*] Better as in the marg.; the "tumult" goes up to heaven calling for punishment (cp. Gen. iv. 10; Ex. iii. 7-9).

LXXV. The Psalmist describes the manifestation of God's righteousness in a time of great affliction. The date of this Psalm is uncertain, but it probably belongs to the same age as the following Psalms attributed to Asaph in this part of the collection. The style is archaic, abrupt, and rather obscure, but full of energy and grandeur.

The structure is graceful, one introductory verse, then four strophes, each of two

Thy wondrous works declare.

2 ¹When I shall receive the congregation—I will judge uprightly.

3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved:

I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

^a Zech. 1.
21.

4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly:

And to the wicked, "Lift not up the horn:

5 Lift not up your horn on high:—speak *not with* a stiff neck.

6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east,
Nor from the west, nor from the ²south.

^b Ps. 50. 6.
& 58. 11.

7 But ^bGod *is* the judge:

He putteth down one, and setteth up another.

^c 1 Sam. 2. 7.
Dan. 2. 21.

8 For ^din the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red;

It is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same:

^d Job 21. 20.
Ps. 60. 3.
Jer. 25. 15.
Rev. 14. 10.
& 16. 19.

^fBut the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring
them out, and drink them.

^e Prov. 23. 30.
^f Ps. 73. 10.

9 But I will declare for ever;

I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

^g Ps. 101. 8.
Jer. 48. 25.

10 ^eAll the horns of the wicked also will I cut off;

But ^hthe horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

^h Ps. 89. 17.
& 146. 14.

PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song ³of Asaph.

^a Ps. 48. 1.

1 IN ^aJudah *is* God known:—his name *is* great in Israel.

2 In Salem also is his tabernacle,—and his dwelling place in
Zion.

^b Ps. 46. 9.
Ezek. 39. 9.

3 ^bThere brake he the arrows of the bow,

The shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

¹ Or, *When I shall take a set time.*

² Heb. *desert.*

³ Or, *for Asaph.*

verses, and a close which recapitulates the leading thoughts in vv. 1 and 4.

1. Or, and Thy name is near, Thy wondrous works have declared it. By the nearness of God's name the Psalmist means the manifestation of God's attributes. God hath shown Himself, and past wonders have declared His power and justice.

2. The marg. reading is preferable. The speaker is God, the "set time" is the time appointed for judgment, "the day of the Lord." The application to Christ is obvious, but the Psalmist contemplated an immediate interposition and with reference to then existing evils.

3. *dissolved*] i.e. with terror, as before the last judgment (Luke xxi. 26).

I bear up] Or, "I have established." The Almighty will maintain fixed order in the midst of all convulsions. The expression "pillars" may, however, be metaphorical, meaning "rulers" (1 Sam. ii. 8).

4. *fools*] Empty foolish boasters (see v. 5, lxxiii. 3).

The word "lift up" marks the leading thought, the pride and self-confidence of God's enemies; the best illustration is found in the speech of Rabshakeh (2 K. xviii. 19 &c.), to which the Psalmist perhaps alludes.

6. *promotion*] Or, "lifting up" (in the original the same word is used in vv. 4, 5, 7,

and 10). The meaning of the verse is that deliverance from trouble and safety comes from no earthly quarter.

7. *setteth up*] Or, *lifteth up* (v. 6 note)
8. *the wine is red*] Or, and it (the cup) foams with wine, full of mixture, i.e. strong spiced wine. A well-known and common figure of divine wrath.

LXXVI. This Psalm refers to the destruction of Sennacherib's army. It is closely connected with the preceding Psalm, written before that judgment which is here represented as consummated.

The structure is regular, four strophes, each of three verses; the first and third marked by Selah.

1. *is God known*] i.e. By the manifestation of His power, both in former times and now by the miraculous destruction of the invading army (cp. marg. ref.).

2. *Salem*] The ancient name of Jerusalem (see Gen. xiv. 18 note).

is his tabernacle] This alludes to the first establishment of the Tabernacle in David's time. Instead of "is" read "was," i.e. hath been set up.

3. *the arrows of the bow*] I.e. the lightnings of the bow, a graphic figure. In lxxviii. 48, the word is rendered "hot thunder-bolts," in Deut. xxxii. 24, "burning heat."

- 4 Thou *art* more glorious and excellent 'than the mountains of prey.
- 5 ^aThe stouthearted are spoiled, 'they have slept their sleep: And none of the men of might have found their hands.
- 6 ^fAt thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.
- 7 Thou, *even* thou, *art* to be feared: And ^ewho may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?
- 8 ^hThou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; 'The earth feared, and was still,
- 9 When God ^karose to judgment, To save all the meek of the earth. Selah.
- 10 ⁱSurely the wrath of man shall praise thee: The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.
- 11 ^mVow, and pay unto the LORD your God: 'Let all that be round about him bring presents ^lunto him that ought to be feared.
- 12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: ^oHe is terrible to the kings of the earth.

^e Ezek. 38. 12, 13.
^f 39. 4.
^g Isai. 48. 12.
^h Ps. 13. 3.
ⁱ Jer. 51. 39.
^j Ex. 15. 1.
^k Ezek. 39. 20.
^l Nah. 2. 13.
^m Zech. 12. 4.
ⁿ Nah. 1. 6.
^o Ezek. 38. 20.
^p 2 Chr. 20. 29, 30.
^q Ps. 9. 7, 8.
^r 72. 4.
^s See Ex. 9. 16.
^t Ps. 65. 7.
^u Eccl. 5. 4, 5, 6.
^v 2 Chr. 32. 22, 23.
^w Ps. 68. 29.
^x Ps. 68. 35.

PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief Musician, *to Jeduthun, A Psalm ²of Asaph.

- 1 ^aI CRIED unto God with my voice, *Even* unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.
- 2 ^bIn the day of my trouble I ^csought the Lord:
- ³My ~~score~~ ran in the night, and ceased not:

^a Ps. 39, & 62, title.
^b Ps. 3. 4.
^c Ps. 50. 15.
^d Isai. 26. 9, 16.

¹ Heb. *to fear*.² Or, *for Asaph*.³ Heb. *My hand*.

4. Or, Thou art glorious, majestic from the mountains of spoil, *i.e.* the strongholds of the invaders. Others understand Jerusalem by the "mountains of spoil," the stronghold where the spoils of the invaders were divided.

5. *slept their sleep*] The sleep of death; a figure peculiarly appropriate to the destruction of the Assyrian army in the dead of night (2 K. xix. 35).

none &c.] This phrase seems to represent a death which comes suddenly; the sleeper, awakened by a sudden pang, endeavours to put off his hands and grasp his weapons, but falls back overwhelmed by deep sleep (*v.* G).

7-9. The description of the effect of God's judgments upon the people; the only grace which the Psalmist claims for his people is meekness, a consciousness of weakness, and dependence on God's power.

10. The meaning of the verse appears to be that all the wrath and violence of man do but serve to bring out the attributes of God, and so display His glory; and that God will put an end to all other outbursts of fury on the part of His enemies. Some render the latter clause: "with a remainder of wrath wilt Thou gird Thyself," *i.e.* should the enemies' rage be renewed, God will arm Himself with fresh wrath, a reserve, so to speak, of vengeance, in order to subdue it.

11. *unto him that ought to be feared*] A

single word in the original, the terrible, the awful and terrible God (cp. Isai. viii. 13).

12. *cut off*] The original word is used especially of cutting grapes in the vintage, and refers to the terrible consummation of judgments.

LXXVII. The Psalmist in some great, and probably national distress, earnestly entreates God for succour, and, at first, seems to despair of it; but the recollection of the miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea turns his despair into hope.

The 3rd chapter of Habakkuk should be read with this Psalm, to which it contains frequent allusions, and of which it is in some sense a continuation. We may conclude with some certainty that the Psalm is earlier than the reigns of Josiah or Manasseh, the age of Habakkuk; but beyond this it is hard to decide anything as to its date.

1. Lit. "My voice (is) unto God, and I cry aloud: my voice (is) unto God, (and I say) Oh give ear unto me!" The rendering, "and He gave ear unto me," does not suit the idea of the Psalm. Hope does not spring up till *v.* 10.

2. *my sore*] Rather as in marg. The meaning is, "My hand is stretched out (in prayer and supplication) all night; and ceases not (to be outspread)."

vv. 1-9 contain a description of the Psalmist during his agony of doubt which

My soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled :

^d Ps. 142. 3. I complained, and ^dmy spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.
 & 143. 4.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking :

I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

^e Deut. 32. 7. 5 ^eI have considered the days of old,—the years of ancient times.

Ps. 143. 5. 6 I call to remembrance ^fmy song in the night:

Isai. 51. 9.

^f Ps. 42. 8.

^f Ps. 4. 4.

^g Ps. 74. 1. 7 ^hWill the Lord cast off for ever ?

^h Ps. 85. 1.

And will he ⁱbe favourable no more ?

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever ?

^k Rom. 9. 6.

Doth ^khis promise fail ^lfor evermore ?

^l Isai. 40. 15.

9 Hath God ^lforgotten to be gracious ?

Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? Selah.

^m Ps. 31. 22. 10 And I said, This *is* ^mmy infirmity :
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

ⁿ Ps. 143. 5. 11 ⁿI will remember the works of the LORD :
 Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12 I will meditate also of all thy work,—and talk of thy doings.

^o Ps. 73. 17.

13 ^oThy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary :

^p Ex. 15. 11.

^pWho *is* so great a God as *our* God ?

14 Thou *art* the God that doest wonders :

Thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

^q Ex. 6. 6.

15 ^qThou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people,

Deut. 9. 29.

The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

^r Ex. 14. 21. 16 ^rThe waters saw thee, O God,
 Josh. 3. 15. The waters saw thee ; they were afraid :
 Ps. 114. 3.

Hab. 3. 8.

¹ Heb. to generation and generation.

is at its climax, almost of despair, in *v.* 7. The tenses in the original are sometimes present, sometimes past, but the purport seems always present.

3. *I complained*] Rather, "I meditate."

4-6. The sense is, "I sleep not through the night, for Thou holdest mine eyes fast, that they watch (as if on sentry) all night. I speak not, for Thou tiest fast my tongue, so that I cannot relieve myself through speaking. I consider the long series of past years and prosperity : I remember the songs which I have often poured forth in the night for mercies received (Job xxxv. 10), and my spirit anxiously asks, Will the Lord" &c.

9. *hath he in anger shut up* &c] *i.e.* "As a man shuts his hand upon a gift which he refuses to bestow, does God shut up His tender mercies within His breast?" Cp. Deut. xv. 7.

Selah, see lxxviii. 7. The import here is the same as in that place: the accompaniments of music and voices are raised to indicate a change in the spirit of the Psalmist, and a consolation suggested by God Himself. In *v.* 15, *Selah* adds force to the description of the awful passage.

10. A disputed verse. Some take the sense to be : "My despair is a mark of infirmity : (remember) the years in which the right hand of the Most High has helped us." The words "but I will remember" are added by the A. V. from *v.* 11. Hence others explain differently, "I said, It is mine appointed lot and trial (cp. Jer. x. 19 ; 1 Pet. v. 6) : years (these are) which the mighty hand of God has laid upon me." Or, "This is my sorrow, that the right hand of the Most High has changed, has turned against me."

11. *I will remember*] Or, "I will make mention of the works of JAH." There is force in the mention of God by this name. The eternal unchangeable Jehovah will act towards his people, always, as of old.

13. *in the sanctuary*] Rather, "in holiness," or, "encompassed with holiness," *i.e.* most holy : as the Prayer-Book Version, "Thy way, O God ! is holy."

15. *The sons of Jacob and Joseph*] The deeds and deservings of Joseph fully explain the selection of his name before that of any other son of Jacob.

16. *The waters* &c.] Cp. Pss. xcvi. cxiv.

The depths also were troubled.

- 17 ¹The clouds poured out water :

The skies sent out a sound :

²Thine arrows also went abroad.

- 18 The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven :

³The lightnings lightened the world :

⁴The earth trembled and shook.

- 19 ⁵Thy way *is* in the sea,—and thy path in the great waters,

⁶And thy footsteps are not known.

- 20 ⁷Thou leddest thy people like a flock

By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM LXXVIII.

⁸Maschil of Asaph.

- 1 ⁹GIVE ear, O my people, to my law :

Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

¹ Heb. *The clouds were poured forth with water.*

Or, A Psalm for Asaph to give instruction.

² 2 Sam. 22.

15.

Hab. 3. 11.

³ Ps. 97. 4.

⁴ 2 Sam. 22. 8.

⁵ Hab. 3. 15.

⁶ Ex. 14. 28.

⁷ Ex. 13. 21.

Ps. 78. 52.

Isai. 63. 11.

Hos. 12. 13.

⁸ Ps. 74,

title.

⁹ Isai. 51. 4.

"The waters of the Red Sea saw God, trembled, and made way for His people to pass!" The consequence is not added in the text: only the fact noticed, that "the waters saw God." The accompaniments of the passage of the Red Sea follow (*vv.* 17, 18), *i.e.* rain, thunder, lightning, and, perhaps, a horrible whirlwind.

17. *The clouds &c.* The marg. is better: "The clouds were poured forth with water." "The skies sent out a sound," or, the heavens uttered a voice (in thunder): "Thine arrows (lightnings) went abroad," hither, thither, and everywhere.

18. Lit. "The voice of Thy thunder was in the wheel," "wheel" being put for "chariot," and indicating the "chariot of God," in which (*cp.* Hab. iii. 8, 15) He troubled the Egyptians. Others render the word "whirlwind," or "rolling." *Cp.* Is. xviii. 3.

20. After the preparation detailed above, God made a way for His people through the sea, and they followed Him: but He Himself is unseen, and His miracles only indicate His Presence. So too in nature, and in the spirit of man, His Presence is not seen; it is only inferred from the deeds which He has done and the traces which He has left.

LXXVIII. The history of Israel, from the Exodus to the establishment of the kingdom of David, is reviewed by Asaph in this the longest, and probably the earliest, of the historical Psalms, intended for public recitation in the services of the Sanctuary (for the facts stated consult throughout the marg. *reff.*) The principal object of the writer is to draw lessons of warning and admonition from the records of national sins and punishments. Special attention is directed to the wrong-doings of one tribe, that of Ephraim; partly, it may be, as having from the time of Joshua throughout the period of the Judges held the post of leader of the whole nation, and as such be-

ing in some sense its representative; partly, however, with reference to the transfer of the national Sanctuary from Shiloh to Mount Zion (*vv.* 67-69). The circumstances which preceded and occasioned the transfer are not described in terms calculated to give reasonable ground of offence to the powerful tribe of Ephraim, nor in such as indicate a settled feeling of animosity; the guilt is described as national, nor is any exemption from it claimed for the tribe of Judah. It is indeed certain that the rivalry between Ephraim and Judah, of which traces may be pointed out in earlier times, burst out into an open quarrel at the time of David's restoration to the kingdom (*see* 2 Sam. xix. 41-43), and such feelings may have given a certain tone to the utterances of the Psalmist. Some, however, think that the Psalm may have been composed some few years after the accession of Solomon, though it is doubtful whether the allusion in *v.* 69 implies the existence of the Temple.

Had the work been written after the revolt of the ten tribes, some reference to that event, and to their relapse into idolatry, might have been looked for: nor would a writer, after the exile, have failed to point out the far more terrible warnings suggested by the Captivity of Judah and the destruction of the Temple.

The style of the whole Psalm accords with the date and authorship usually assigned to it. It has the characteristics of Asaph, gravity, force, "a lofty judicial tone, with awful warnings and admonitions:" there are also special points of resemblance with other Psalms which belong to him or to the Korahites.

The structure of the Psalm is thoroughly symmetrical: it is divided at the end of *v.* 31 into two parts, each consisting of seven strophes.

1. *Give ear, O my people*] This exordium befits the position and character of Asaph,

- * Ps. 49. 4.
 Matt. 13. 35.
 * Ps. 44. 1.
 * Joel 1. 3.
 * Ex. 12. 26.
 & 13. 8, 14.
 Josh. 4. 6.
 / Ps. 147. 19.
 * Deut. 4. 9.
 & 6. 7.
 & 11. 19.
 * Ps. 102. 18.
 * 2 K. 17. 14.
 Ezek. 20. 18.
 * Ex. 32. 9.
 & 34. 9.
 Deut. 9. 6.
 & 31. 27.
 Ps. 68. 6.
 * ver. 37.
 2 Chr. 20. 33.
 * 2 K. 17. 15.
 * Ps. 106. 13.
 * Ex. 7-12.
 * Num. 13.
 22.
 Isai. 19. 11.
 Ezek. 30. 14.
 2 ^bI will open my mouth in a parable:
 I will utter dark sayings of old:
 3 ^cWhich we have heard and known,
 And our fathers have told us.
 4 ^dWe will not hide *them* from their children,
^eShewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
 And his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.
 5 For ^fhe established a testimony in Jacob,
 And appointed a law in Israel,
 Which he commanded our fathers,
^gThat they should make them known to their children:
 6 ^hThat the generation to come might know *them*,
Even the children which should be born;
Who should arise and declare them to their children:
 7 That they might set their hope in God,
 And not forget the works of God,
 But keep his commandments:
 8 And ⁱmight not be as their fathers,
^kA stubborn and rebellious generation;
 A generation ^lthat set not their heart aright,
 And whose spirit was not stedfast with God.
 9 The children of Ephraim, *being armed, and* ^mcarrying bows,
 Turned back in the day of battle.
 10 ⁿThey kept not the covenant of God,
 And refused to walk in his law;
 11 And ^oforgot his works,
 And his wonders that he had shewed them.
 12 ^pMarvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,
 In the land of Egypt, ^qin the field of Zoan.
¹ Heb. that *prepared not their heart.* ² Heb. *throwing forth.*

and bears a striking resemblance to his style. In Ps. 1. he speaks as a Prophet calling the people to listen to the words of the Lord; here he speaks in the name of God as a public teacher, commissioned to proclaim and explain the Law.

2. *a parable*] Here in the widest sense, sententious sayings, drawing out the hidden meaning of ancient records.

dark sayings] Sayings which contain deeper truths than lie on the surface. The expressions in this verse belong specially to the age of Solomon.

4. *We will not hide &c.*] In discharging this duty of a teacher Asaph is obeying the ancient injunction of the Law (cp. Deut. iv. 9, vi. 7). See also Job xv. 18. Points of resemblance with Job are numerous in all the songs of Asaph.

8. *a stubborn and rebellious generation*] Asaph here strikes the key-note of his exhortation. It is peculiar to the Prophets and teachers of Israel to urge without sparing the warnings derived from the sins of their forefathers.

9. The mention of Ephraim in this passage is perplexing. In it a double charge is brought against the Ephraimites, cowardice in battle, and disobedience to God. The

former charge may refer to a defeat by some heathen nation (cp. Judges ii. 10-16). It is also possible that the national guilt of idolatry was specially connected with the tribe of Ephraim (cp. Hos. iv. 17). Still in all other passages both charges are brought against the nation as such. Some have therefore assumed that the name of Ephraim has been substituted by a transcriber for that of Israel (cp. v. 57).

12. Zoan or Tanis, now San, was a city of great importance, and the chief residence of the Pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties on the North-western frontier. The mention of the name in this passage may either be attributed to an ancient tradition independent of the Pentateuch, or to the knowledge of Egypt which was a result of the friendly intercourse of David and the marriage of Solomon with an Egyptian princess. It has therefore a peculiar propriety in the mouth of the elder Asaph. The hieroglyphic name of Zoan, exactly corresponding with the Hebrew, and the further peculiarity of expression, "the field of Zoan," are found in Egyptian inscriptions: and Zoan is not now considered identical with Avaris, but with Rameses, the city from which the Israelites started on their march out of

- 13 ^aHe divided the sea, and caused them to pass through;
And ^bhe made the waters to stand as an heap.
- 14 ^aIn the daytime also he led them with a cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
- 15 ^aHe clave the rocks in the wilderness,
And gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.
- 16 He brought ^astreams also out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.
- 17 And they signed yet more against him
By ^aprovoking the most High in the wilderness.
- 18 And ^athey tempted God in their heart
By asking meat for their lust.
- 19 ^aYea, they spake against God; they said,
Can God ^bfurnish a table in the wilderness?
- 20 ^aBehold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out,
And the streams overflowed;
Can he give bread also?
Can he provide flesh for his people?
- 21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and ^bwas wroth:
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also came up against Israel;
- 22 Because they ^cbelieved not in God,
And trusted not in his salvation:
- 23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above,
^dAnd ^eopened the doors of heaven,
- 24 ^eAnd had rained down manna upon them to eat,
And had given them of the corn of heaven.
- 25 ^fMan did eat angels' food:—he sent them meat to the full.
- 26 ^fHe caused an east wind ^gto blow in the heaven:
And by his power he brought in the south wind.
- 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust,
And ^hfeathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:
- 28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp,
Round about their habitations.
- 29 ⁱSo they did eat, and were well filled:
For he gave them their own desire;
- 30 They were not estranged from their lust.
But ^jwhile their meat *was* yet in their mouths,
- 31 The wrath of God came upon them,
And slew the fattest of them,
And ^ksmote down the ^lchosen men of Israel.

¹ Heb. *order*.

² Or, *Every one did eat the bread of the mighty*, Ps.

103. 20.

³ Heb. *to go*.

⁴ Heb. *fowl of wing*.

⁵ Heb. *made to bow*.

⁶ Or, *young men*.

Egypt: two points of great importance in reference to this Psalm and to Exodus [correct notes to Ex. i. 8, ii. 5].

18. *they tempted*] *i.e.* By inwardly questioning His goodness and power (cp. 1 Cor. x. 9).

25. *angels' food*] Lit. *as* in the marg. The interpretation of the A.V., which follows the old Versions (see also Wisd. xvi. 20), is to be understood in the sense of "food supplied by angelic ministrations,"

equivalent to "the corn of heaven" in the preceding clause. The symbolism of manna is recognized by all Christian divines, and rests upon the authority of our Lord, from Whose words it is clear that manna was a product of earth, supplied by heavenly power, and a figure of the true bread (John vi. 49-51).

30. *They were not estranged &c.*] *i.e.* They had not as yet satiated their appetite; or, "had not yet repented of their desire."

- ¹ Num. 14.
 & 16, & 17.
² ver. 22.
³ Num. 14.
 29, 35.
 & 26, 64.
⁴ See Hos.
 5, 15.
⁵ Deut. 32.
 4, 15, 31.
⁶ Ex. 15, 13.
 Deut. 7, 8.
 Isai. 41, 14.
 & 63, 9.
⁷ Ezek. 33.
 31.
⁸ ver. 8.
⁹ Num. 14.
 18, 20.
¹⁰ Isai. 48, 9.
¹¹ 1 K. 21, 29.
¹² Ps. 103, 14.
 16.
¹³ Gen. 6, 3.
 John 3, 6.
¹⁴ Job 7, 7.
 Jam. 4, 14.
¹⁵ Ps. 95, 9.
 Isai. 7, 13.
 & 63, 10.
 Eph. 4, 30.
 Heb. 3, 16.
¹⁶ Num. 14.
 22.
 Deut. 6, 16.
¹⁷ ver. 20.
¹⁸ ver. 12.
 Ps. 105, 27.
¹⁹ Ex. 7, 20.
 Ps. 105, 29.
²⁰ Ex. 8, 24.
 Ps. 105, 31.
²¹ Ex. 8, 6.
 Ps. 105, 30.
²² Ex. 10, 13.
 Ps. 105, 34.
²³ Ex. 9, 23.
 25.
 Ps. 105, 33.
²⁴ Ps. 105, 32.
 32 For all this ¹they sinned still,
 And ²believed not for his wondrous works.
 33 ¹Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,
 And their years in trouble.
 34 ²When he slew them, then they sought him :
 And they returned and enquired early after God.
 35 And they remembered that ³God *was* their rock,
 And the high God ⁴their redeemer.
 36 Nevertheless they did ⁵flatter him with their mouth,
 And they lied unto him with their tongues.
 37 For ⁶their heart was not right with him,
 Neither were they stedfast in his covenant.
 38 ⁷But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and
 destroyed *them* not :
 Yea, many a time ⁸turned he his anger away,
⁹And did not stir up all his wrath.
 39 For ¹⁰he remembered ¹¹that they *were but* flesh ;
¹²A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
 40 How oft did they ¹³provoke him in the wilderness,
 And grieve him in the desert !
 41 Yea, ¹⁴they turned back and tempted God,
 And ¹⁵limited the Holy One of Israel.
 42 They remembered not his hand,
 Nor the day when he delivered them ¹⁶from the enemy.
 43 How ¹⁷he had ¹⁸wrought his signs in Egypt,
 And his wonders in the field of Zoan :
 44 ¹⁹And had turned their rivers into blood ;
 And their floods, that they could not drink.
 45 ²⁰He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them ;
 And ²¹frogs, which destroyed them.
 46 ²²He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar,
 And their labour unto the locust.
 47 ²³He ²⁴destroyed their vines with hail,
 And their sycamore trees with ²⁵frost.
 48 ²⁶He gave up their cattle also to the hail,
 And their flocks to ²⁷hot thunderbolts.
 49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger,
 Wrath, and indignation, and trouble,
 By sending evil angels *among them*.
 50 ²⁸He made a way to his anger ;
 He spared not their soul from death,
 But gave ²⁹their life over to the pestilence ;
 51 ³⁰And smote all the firstborn in Egypt ;
 The chief of *their* strength in ³¹the tabernacles of Ham :

²⁸ Ex. 12, 29.
 Ps. 105, 36.
 & 138, 10.
³¹ Ps. 106, 22.

¹ Or, *rebel against him*.
² Or, *from affliction*.
³ Heb. *set*.

⁴ Heb. *killed*.
⁵ Or, *great hailstones*.
⁶ Heb. *He shut up*.
⁷ Or, *lightnings*.

⁸ Heb. *He weighed a path*.
⁹ Or, *their beasts to the murrain*, Ex. 9, 3, 6.

33. *vanity*] The Hebrew word is used specially of short and insecure life (cp. the name Abel, Gen. iv. 2 note). The whole generation died out prematurely.

34. *early*] Or, "earnestly." See lxxiii. 1 note.
41. *limited*] In their minds set limits to His power. The Hebrew word is rare, and the meaning disputed. Others follow the LXX., "provoked."

47. *their vines*] On the vineyards of Egypt, see Gen. xl. 9 note.

49. *by sending evil angels among them*] Or, *a mission of angels of woe*. The evil is not necessarily in the nature of the angels, but in the penalties which they are commissioned to inflict. Natural agencies may possibly be included. See civ. 4.

51. *Ham*] The father of Mizraim : Chem,

- 52 But ^mmade his own people to go forth like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
- 53 And he ⁿled them on safely, so that they feared not :
But the sea ^ooverwhelmed their enemies.
- 54 And he brought them to the border of his ^psanctuary,
Even to this mountain, ^qwhich his right hand had purchased.
- 55 ^rHe cast out the heathen also before them,
And ^sdivided them an inheritance by line,
And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
- 56 ^tYet they tempted and provoked the most high God,
And kept not his testimonies :
- 57 But ^uturned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers :
They were turned aside ^vlike a deceitful bow.
- 58 ^wFor they provoked him to anger with their ^xhigh places,
And moved him to jealousy with their graven images.
- 59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth,
And greatly abhorred Israel :
- 60 ^aSo that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent *which* he placed among men ;
- 61 ^bAnd delivered his strength into captivity,
And his glory into the enemy's hand.
- 62 ^cHe gave his people over also unto the sword ;
And was wroth with his inheritance.
- 63 The fire consumed their young men ;
And ^dtheir maidens were not ^egiven to marriage.
- 64 ^fTheir priests fell by the sword ;
And ^gtheir widows made no lamentation.
- 65 Then the Lord ^hawaked as one out of sleep,
And ⁱlike a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.
- ¹ Heb. *covered*. ² Heb. *praised*.

^m Ps. 77. 20.
ⁿ Ex. 14. 19.
^o Ex. 14. 27, 28.
^p Ex. 15. 17.
^q Ps. 44. 3.
^r Ps. 44. 2.
^s Josh. 13. 7.
^t Ps. 136. 21.
^u Judg. 2. 11, 12.
^v ver. 41.
^w Ezek. 20. 27, 28.
^x Hos. 7. 16.
^y Deut. 32. 16, 21.
^z Judg. 2. 12.
^a Ezek. 20. 28.
^b Deut. 12. 2, 4.
^c 1 K. 11. 7.
^d & 12. 31.
^e 1 Sam. 4. 11.
^f Jer. 28. 6.
^g Judg. 18. 30.
^h 1 Sam. 4. 10.
ⁱ Jer. 7. 34.
^j & 16. 9.
^k & 25. 10.
^l 1 Sam. 4. 11.
^m & 22. 18.
ⁿ Job 27. 15.
^o Ezek. 24. 23.
^p Ps. 44. 23.
^q Isai. 42. 13.

or Ham (black), is the Egyptian name of the whole country, derived, as Egyptologists hold, from the black soil of the Nile.

52. *like sheep*] See marg. ref.

54. *this mountain*] Probably the mountain of the Sanctuary, Moriah (see marg. ref.). Others hold that it may apply to the whole of Canaan.

57. *like a deceitful bow*] The apostasy is here distinctly represented as the sin of the whole nation, not of one tribe.

59. *Israel*] This is supposed by many critics to apply specially or exclusively to Ephraim, on account of the reference to Shiloh and to Judah in *vv.* 60, 68 : but the guilt which brought on the punishment was national, and was visited on the whole people.

60. *the tabernacle of Shiloh*] The establishment of the Tabernacle is narrated in Josh. xviii. 1. It was the national Sanctuary throughout the period of the Judges ; the forsaking here spoken of was accomplished or testified by the capture of the Ark. The Tabernacle itself appears to have been removed first to Nob (1 Sam. xvi. 1), and then to Gibeon (1 K. iii. 4). From Jeremiah vii. 12 we learn that the

Sanctuary had been deserted, if not destroyed, probably long before the Prophet's time.

61. *his strength*] The Ark of the Covenant (see lxiii. 2 note). Thus, too, glory is associated with the Ark ; hence the name I-chabod (1 Sam. iv. 21).

62. There is no indication here of a visitation on Ephraim specially : the whole people were reduced to subjection under the Philistines.

63. *The fire*] Either the fire of war, or the fire of Divine wrath.

given to marriage] Or, as in the marg., referring to bridal songs such as Ps. xlv. and Song of Sol. iv.

64. *and their widows &c.*] The neglect of funeral rites marks the extremity of desolation.

65. The awakening marks the manifestation of Divine power, sudden, unexpected, irresistible. Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 6, 12.

shouteth] The cry of the warrior after a long cessation from fighting, full of strength and fury. The reader will remember the shout of Achilles, the turning point of the Iliad.

- ¹ Sam. 5. 66 And ¹he smote his enemies in the hinder parts :
 6, 12. He put them to a perpetual reproach.
 & 6. 4. 67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph,
 And chose not the tribe of Ephraim :
 68 But chose the tribe of Judah,
 The mount Zion ²which he loved.
² Ps. 87. 2. 69 And he ¹built his sanctuary like high *palaces*,
¹ K. 6. Like the earth which he hath ¹established for ever.
³ 1 Sam. 16. 70 ³He chose David also his servant,
 11, 12. And took him from the sheepfolds :
 2 Sam. 7. 8. 71 ²From following ²the ewes great with young he ¹brought him
 Gen. 33. 13. ²To feed Jacob his people,
 Isai. 40. 11. And Israel his inheritance.
² 2 Sam. 5. 2. 72 So he fed them according to the ²integrity of his heart ;
 1 Chr. 11. 2. And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.
² 1 K. 9. 4.

PSALM LXXIX.

A Psalm ²of Asaph.

- ^a Ex. 15. 17. 1 O GOD, the heathen are come into ^athine inheritance ;
 Ps. 74. 2. ^bThy holy temple have they defiled ;
^b Ps. 74. 7. ^cThey have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
^c 2 K. 25. 9, 10. 2 ^aThe dead bodies of thy servants have they given
 Mic. 3. 12. ^dTo be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,
^d Jer. 7. 33. The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
 & 34. 20. 3 Their blood have they shed like water
 Round about Jerusalem ; ^eand *there was none to bury them*.
^e Ps. 141. 7. 4 ^fWe are become a reproach to our neighbours,
 Jer. 14. 16. A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
 & 16. 4.
 Rev. 11. 9. ^f Ps. 44. 13.
 & 80. 6. ¹ Heb. *founded*. ² Heb. *From after*. ³ Or, *for Asaph*.

66. *in the hinder parts*] Rather, **backward**, as in xl. 14.

67. One result of the long series of victories by which God delivered His people from their oppressors was the final transfer of the Sanctuary to Zion. The Tabernacle of Joseph, i.e. of the tribe of Ephraim, ceased to be the centre of the national religion.

68. *which he loved*] The proof of that love was the transfer of the Ark to Zion (see 2 Sam. vi. 12-18).

69. *like high palaces*] Rather, "like the heights" of heaven (cp. Job xxi. 22, xxii. 12). The comparison with heaven seems far more appropriate than with earthly palaces, and is applicable to the Tabernacle as the abode of the Lord.

70. In this great liturgical Psalm the call of David necessarily takes its place as the climax of all blessings. During the king's life the record of his humble estate and calling has a special propriety.

LXXIX. See introduction to Ps. lxxiv. Both Psalms may have been composed immediately after the plundering of the Temple by Shishak, when the Psalmist would have before him the scenes so graphically described. Some assign this Psalm to the Chaldean invasion, others to the Maccabean period ; but see Introduction p. 97.

There are four strophes, the first with

four verses, each of the remainder with three. The verses are somewhat longer than usual, with unequal numbers, a form well adapted to elegiac poetry.

1. *defiled*] The word implies the actual presence of the enemy in the Temple, but not its destruction. In the 5th year of Rehoboam Shishak took away the treasures of the house of the Lord (see 1 K. xiv. 25, 26 ; 2 Chr. xii. 2-10). This description is equally applicable to the profanation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes.

on heaps] Or, "in ruins." From the very brief notices of Shishak's invasion, it is clear that the city was spared, but apparently after a siege, during which a considerable portion may have been laid in heaps by the formidable engines of the Egyptians. The historical period, which so far agrees most fully with this description, is that of the Chaldeans (cp. marg. refl.).

2. *The dead bodies*] The passage is quoted, evidently as an old prophecy fulfilled in his own time, by the author of the Maccabees (1 Mac. vii. 17). The circumstance in itself supplies no indication of date : it was common to every foreign invasion.

thy servants] Or, "saints" (see xvi. 10 note) ; the term is generic, but implies personal piety.

4. *our neighbours*] The word implies ac-

- 5 ^oHow long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever?
 Shall thy ^ajealousy burn like fire?
- 6 ^oPour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have ^knot known thee,
 And upon the kingdoms that have ^lnot called upon thy name.
- 7 For they have devoured Jacob,
 And laid waste his dwelling place.
- 8 ^mO remember not against us ^lformer iniquities:
 Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us:
 For we are ⁿbrought very low.
- 9 ^oHelp us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name:
 And deliver us, and purge away our sins, ^pfor thy name's sake.
- 10 ^oWherefore should the heathen say, Where is thy God?
 Let him be known among the heathen in our sight
 By the ^qrevenging of the blood of thy servants *which is shed*.
- 11 Let ^rthe sighing of the prisoner come before thee;
 According to the greatness of ^sthy power ^tpreserve thou those
 that are appointed to die;
- 12 And render unto our neighbours ^usevenfold into their bosom
^vTheir reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.
- 13 So ^wwe thy people and sheep of thy pasture
 Will give thee thanks for ever:
^xWe will shew forth thy praise ^yto all generations.

PSALM LXXX.

To the chief Musician ^zupon Shoshannim-Eduth, A Psalm ^{aa}of Asaph.

- 1 GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
 Thou that leadest Joseph ^{ab}like a flock;
^{ac}Thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, ^{ad}shine forth.

¹ Or, *the iniquities of them that were before us*.
² Heb. *vengeance*.

³ Heb. *thine arm*.
⁴ Heb. *reserve the children of death*.

⁵ Heb. *to generation and generation*.
⁶ Or, *for Asaph*.

^o Ps. 74. 1.
 & 89. 46.
^a Zeph. 1. 18.
 & 3. 8.
^b Jer. 10. 25.
 Rev. 16. 1.
^c Isai. 45. 4.
 2 Thess. 1. 8.
^d Ps. 53. 4.
^m Isai. 64. 9.
ⁿ Deut. 28. 43.
 Ps. 142. 6.
^o 2 Chr. 14. 11.
^p Jer. 14. 7.
^q Ps. 42. 10.
 & 115. 2.
^r Ps. 102. 20.
^s Gen. 4. 15.
 Isai. 65. 6.
 Jer. 32. 18.
 Luke 6. 38.
^t Ps. 74. 18.
^u Ps. 74. 1.
 & 95. 7.
 & 100. 3.
^v Isai. 43. 21.
^w Ps. 45. & 69, title.
^x Ps. 77. 20.
^y Ex. 25. 20.
^z 1 Sam. 4. 4.
 2 Sam. 6. 2.
 Ps. 99. 1.
^{aa} Deut. 33. 2.
 Ps. 50. 2.
 & 94. 1.

tual "dwellers" in and about the territory; such, for instance, as the descendants of the old inhabitants who had been reduced to subjection by David, and were employed, perhaps with little consideration, in the works of Solomon's reign. Their exultation at the humiliation of his successor is just what might be expected.

round about us] The neighbouring tribes and nations, Syrians, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites (1 K. xi. 14, &c.).

5. *How long*] The nation was in subjection to Shishak for some time (see 2 Chr. xii. 8).

7. *dwelling place*] Properly a habitation of shepherds; in this and most other passages it is understood to denote "pasture," the pastoral district. The word is used of the Sanctuary in Ex. xv. 13.

8. *for we are brought very low*] These words are not strong enough for the destruction of the nation: the writer was evidently in his own land, then in lowly estate, as it would be under Shishak.

10. Triumph over a nation was always regarded as a proof of the weakness or absence of its God: hence the force of the following appeal, the blood shed by

the invader was that of Jehovah's servants.

11. The monuments of Karnak show that Shishak led numbers of the Jewish nobility into captivity, and that many were reserved for death as offerings to his god. The prisoners who were sent to Babylon were not massacred, Nebuchadnezzar slew his victims on the spot. In no part of the Psalm do we find a prayer for the general restoration of the nation, such as characterizes all the productions of the later period.

LXXX. The prayers in this Psalm apply specially to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. It was evidently written while the Temple was standing (r. 1 note), and the people to which the Psalmist belongs occupied their native land. The devastation was terrible, but the Psalmist relies on the continued favour of God, and anticipates a final deliverance. All these circumstances point either to the period immediately preceding the Captivity of the ten tribes, or to the interval between that event and the Chaldean invasion. It is, however, not improbable that it was composed with reference to the events which

- ^d Num. 2. 18-23.
^e ver. 7. 19. Lam. 5. 21.
^f Num. 6. 25. Ps. 4. 6. & 67. 1.
- 2 ^dBefore Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh
 Stir up thy strength,—and ¹come and save us.
- 3 ^eTurn us again, O God,
 And cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
- 4 O LORD God of hosts,
 How long ²wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
- 5 ^gThou feedest them with the bread of tears;
 And givest them tears to drink in great measure.
- 6 ^hThou makest us a strife unto our neighbours:
 And our enemies laugh among themselves.
- 7 ⁱTurn us again, O God of hosts,
 And cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
- 8 Thou hast brought ^ka vine out of Egypt:
 Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
- 9 Thou ^mpreparedst room before it,
 And didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.
- 10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it,
 And the boughs thereof were like ³the goodly cedars.
- 11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea,
 And her branches ⁿunto the river.
- ¹ Heb. come for salvation to us. ² Heb. wilt thou smoke, Ps. 74. 1. ³ Heb. the cedars of God.

also gave occasion to Pss. lxxiv. and lxxix. The extreme beauty of the imagery, the grace and dignity of the style, remind the reader of the noblest productions of Asaph's school.

The structure of this elegiac Psalm is peculiar: vv. 3, 7, 19 are a refrain, and the strophes within the refrain (v. 3 note) in which the predicates of God increase gradually, are longer by degrees, consisting severally of three, four, and two of six verses.

1. The Psalmist grounds the appeal to God on His old relation to Israel (cp. Gen. xlviii. 15), and on His continued Presence in the Temple between the Cherubim. The prayer is for all Israel, but apparently with special regard to the ten tribes.

2. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh are named together (see marg. ref.), probably as children of Rachel; the Psalmist prays that God's power may be specially manifested in the salvation of those three tribes. Benjamin was united to the kingdom of Judah; but a large portion, including the cities Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho, belonged to the northern kingdom, and it is probable that the district was overrun, and the inhabitants led into captivity, by Shalmaneser. Shishak also captured several cities in the same district. This passage is conclusive against a Maccabean date for the Psalm.

3. *Turn us again*] Either a restoration from captivity, or more generally a deliverance from any great calamity (see Job xlii. 10 note). In this first refrain we have the name Elohim, God, only: in v. 7, Elohim,

God of hosts; in the 4th and last verses, Jehovah, Elohim, God of hosts, a striking combination, which shows how much the Psalmist was guided by subjective feeling in the choice of the Divine names, and how little dependence can be placed upon chronological assumptions based on such usage.

4. *O LORD God of hosts*] A form not common in the Psalms, but occurring in lix. 5, lxxxiv. 8.

wilt thou be angry] Lit. "hast thou smoked," a common metaphor for wrath. The Psalmist uses the past tense because the wrath has already been long manifested; the A. V. gives the substantial meaning.

against the prayer] Lit. "with (i.e. notwithstanding) the prayer;" the anger continues, as yet not appeased by prayer.

6. *our neighbours*] Here, as in lxxix. 4, the Psalmist probably alludes to the remnants of Gentile races scattered through Palestine, and ever ready to take part with Israel's enemies.

8. *a vine out of Egypt*] This passage draws out all the force and beauty of the figure first applied to Joseph in the blessing of Jacob, to which the Psalmist refers (Gen. xlix. 22).

planted it] Cp. Ex. xv. 17, to which the Psalmist probably refers.

10. *goodly cedars*] Lit. as in the marg. The object of the Psalmist is to show the more than natural growth of the nation.

11. *the river*] The Euphrates, the extreme limit of the Israelite kingdom in its ideal extent, nearly realized under Solomon.

- 12 Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges,
So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? ° Ps. 89. 40.
Isai. 5. 5.
Nah. 2. 2.
- 13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it,
And the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
- 14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts :
° Look down from heaven, and behold,—and visit this vine; ° Isai. 63. 15.
- 15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted,
And the branch *that* thou madest strong ° for thyself. ° Isai. 49. 5.
- 16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down :
° They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. ° Ps. 39. 11.
& 76. 7.
° Ps. 89. 21.
- 17 ° Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.
- 18 So will not we go back from thee :
Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.
- 19 ° Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts,
Cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. ° ver. 3. 7.

PSALM LXXXI.

To the chief Musician * upon Gittith, A Psalm ° of Asaph.

* Ps. 8, title.

- 1 SING aloud unto God our strength :
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
- 2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
- 3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
In the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.
- 4 For ° *this was* a statute for Israel,
And a law of the God of Jacob. ° Lev. 23. 24.
Num. 10. 10.

¹ Or, *for Asaph.*

13. *the boar...the wild beast*] A general description of the invaders.

14. *Return, we beseech thee*] See v. 3.

15. *vineyard*] The original of this word occurs only here. Others take it to be a verb, and following the interpretation of the LXX. render, "and protect what Thy hand planted," &c.

branch] In the original "son," which may be equivalent to branch (as in Gen. xlix. 22 note), but more probably it is to be understood literally; the Psalmist leaves the metaphor and points out its meaning. The vine which God plants is Israel His adopted child (Hos. xi. 1; Ex. iv. 22).

16. *cut down*] The word is used specially of thorns cut down, and used as fuel (Isai. xxxiii. 12). Cf. John xv. 6.

17. *the man of thy right hand*] i.e. The people of Israel, so called as delivered by God's power and strengthened for His special service: or David (see marg. ref.). The application to the Messiah rests upon the fact that He is the ideal and representative of the nation. What is partially true of the nation, is absolutely true of Him. See Luke i. 66.

18. *Quicken us*] i.e. "Restore us to life," give us renewed life (lxxi. 20). The spiritual application of this Psalm reaches the central and most vital truths of religion, the re-

demption of God's people by the Son of Man, and their renovation by His Spirit.

LXXXI. A Psalm for public recitation at a festival, and, as the mention of trumpets indicates (v. 3), at the Feast of Tabernacles on the 1st of Tisri. The rapid alternation of interlocutors, and the style, grave and energetic, are characteristic of Asaph.

1. *make a joyful noise*] The word is specially used of the blare of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24). See xlvii. 1.

2. *the timbrel*] An Egyptian word; the instrument was probably round (Ex. xv. 20 note).

3. *in the new moon*] Every new moon was celebrated both with sacrifices (Num. xxviii. 11) and with sound of trumpets, but the new moon of the seventh month, the sabbatic month, in which the great Feast of Tabernacles was observed, was especially solemnized by blowing of trumpets (Num. xxix. 1).

our solemn feast day] The Feast of Tabernacles was especially remarkable for its festive character, so that it was frequently called "the Feast" absolutely. There was an interval of fifteen days between the new moon and its celebration, and this Psalm may have been recited on both occasions.

- 5 This he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony,
When he went out ¹through the land of Egypt:
^b *Where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.
- ^b Ps. 114. 1.
- ^c Isai. 9. 4.
& 10. 27.
^d Ex. 1. 14.
^e Ex. 2. 23.
& 14. 10.
Ps. 60. 15.
^f Ex. 19. 19.
^g Ex. 17. 6.
Num. 20. 13.
^h Ps. 50. 7.
ⁱ Ex. 20. 3.
^k Deut. 32. 12.
Isai. 43. 12.
^l Ex. 20. 2.
- 6 ^c I removed his shoulder from the burden:
His hands ²were delivered from ^dthe pots.
- 7 ^eThou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee;
^f I answered thee in the secret place of thunder:
I ^gproved thee at the waters of ^hMeribah. Selah.
- 8 ^hHear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:
O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;
- 9 ⁱThere shall no ^kstrange god be in thee;
Neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
- 10 ^lI *am* the LORD thy God,
Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt:
^mOpen thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
- 11 But my people would not hearken to my voice;
And Israel would ⁿnone of me.
- 12 ^oSo I gave them up ⁴unto their own hearts' lust:
And they walked in their own counsels.
- 13 ^pOh that my people had hearkened unto me,
And Israel had walked in my ways!
- 14 I should soon have subdued their enemies,
And turned my hand against their adversaries.
- 15 ^qThe haters of the LORD should have ⁵⁶submitted themselves
unto him:
But their time should have endured for ever.
- 16 He should ^rhave fed them also ⁷with the finest of the wheat:
And with honey ⁴out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.
- ^r Deut. 32.
13, 14.
Ps. 147. 14.
^s Job 29. 6.

PSALM LXXXII.

A Psalm ⁸of Asaph.

- ^a 2 Chr. 19. 6.
Ecc. 5. 8.
^b Ex. 21. 6.
& 22. 23.
- 1 GOD ^astandeth in the congregation of the mighty;
He judgeth among ^bthe gods.
- ¹ Or, *against*.
² Heb. *passed away*.
³ Or, *Strife*.
⁴ Or, *to the hardness of*
- their hearts, or, imaginations.*
⁵ Or, *yielded feigned obedience*, Ps. 18. 44.
- ⁶ Heb. *lied*.
⁷ Heb. *with the fat of wheat*.
⁸ Or, *for Asaph*.

5. Rather, omitting "where," I heard a language I knew not. This is generally understood to mean a foreign, barbarous language, and the interpretation is borne out by many similar passages (Deut. xxviii. 49; Isai. xxxiii. 19); but there appears good reason to adopt another sense, "there I heard for the first time the voice of God, which I knew not, speaking on Sinai." The reference to that great manifestation seems better suited to the context, and introduces the following address of the Deity.

6. *from the pots*] Earthen vessels, as in Job xli. 31; or, *the basket*, in which Egyptian bricklayers bore the clay for bricks (thus the LXX.).

7. *in the secret place of thunder*] The cloud by which the Almighty at once manifested and veiled His Presence, before, during, and after the passage through the Red Sea.

10. *Open thy mouth wide*] See marg. refl.

The promise may include all wants spiritual and temporal.

12. *unto their own hearts' lust*] Or, "to the stubbornness of their hearts." Cp. Deut. xxix. 19.

counsels] i.e. Human counsels, apart from and opposed to the Divine (Mic. vi. 16).

14. *soon*] Or, "in a little;" that would have been a sure, natural, and easy result.

15. See marg. note 5 and ref.

LXXXII. Asaph denounces the injustice, corruption, and ignorance of the judges of Israel, and threatens them with destruction. The Psalm has bold and remarkable expressions, and the style is pure, compact, and vigorous, but there are no certain indications of date. It may have been written under one of the kings of Judah, either by the elder Asaph at a period of general corruption, as in the reign of Rehoboam; or by a descendant bearing the same name, on the eve of a vigorous reformation, such as that

- 2 How long will ye judge unjustly,
And 'accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
- 3 ¹Defend the poor and fatherless:
^aDo justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 ^eDeliver the poor and needy:
Rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They ^fknow not, neither will they understand;
They walk on in darkness:
^gAll the foundations of the earth are ²out of course.
- 6 ^hI have said, "Ye are gods;
And all of you *are* children of the most High.
- 7 But 'ye shall die like men,
And fall like one of the princes.
- 8 ^kArise, O God, judge the earth:
^lFor thou shalt inherit all nations.

^a Dent. 1. 17.
² Chr. 19. 7.
Prov. 18. 6.
^e Jer. 22. 3.
^f Job 29. 12.
Prov. 24. 11.

^f Mic. 3. 1.

^g Ps. 11. 3.
& 75. 3.
^h Ex. 22. 9, 28.
ver. 1.
John 10. 34.
ⁱ Job 21. 32.
Ps. 49. 12.
Ezek. 31. 14.
^k Mic. 7. 2, 7.
^l Ps. 2. 8.
Rev. 11. 15.

PSALM LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm ³of Asaph.

- 1 KEEP ^anot thou silence, O God:
Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

¹ Heb. *Judge*.

² Heb. *moved*.

³ Or, *for Asaph*.

^a Ps. 28. 1.
& 35. 22.
& 109. 1.

ushered in by Asa, and accomplished by Jehoshaphat (see 2 Chr. xv. 18, 19, xix. 4-11).

The division into two parts, each of four verses, is distinctly marked; but the strophes are irregular and somewhat abrupt in accordance with the general tone of the Psalm.

1. *In the congregation of the mighty*] Rather, *In the assembly of El*, i.e. of the Almighty, not the congregation of the princes of the earth, but the assembly called by the supreme God.

In this verse the Psalmist represents God as holding a court of judgment in heaven surrounded by the Divine ministers ("gods"), who will execute His behests (see 1 K. xxii. 19; Job i. 6).

2. This and the rest of the Psalm is addressed by Asaph in the name of the God of judgment, to the unrighteous judges of Israel. The evils are those denounced by all the Prophets. See the marg. ref.

5. *are out of course*] Rather, *are shaken*; referring to the disturbance of the fundamental principles on which the administration of justice rests.

6. The meaning appears to be "I," i.e. the Psalmist, "I, for my part, said, Ye are gods and sons of the Almighty, all of you," representatives of God, sharing in a peculiar sense His very attributes. The name of god in this sense is certainly attributed to earthly judges (Ex. xxi. 6; 1 Sam. ii. 25), and it is so used by our Lord (see ref.) The Psalmist expresses the profound reverence entertained by Israelites, and justified by the Divine Law, towards the viceregents and representatives of God on earth.

7. *like men*.] Lit. *like Adam*, which may either mean share the common lot of mortality, or, with a more pointed reference, like Adam when he violated the conditions on which he held life (cp. Job xxxi. 33; Hos. vi. 7).

the princes] i.e. The princes who had been cut off as enemies of God, probably with special allusion (as in lxxxiii. 11) to the Midianite princes. Two examples are thus held up—the one of Adam, the son of God in a special sense by creation, who died for disobedience, and the other of sinners cut off in their antagonism to God.

8. *inherit*] The word means that all nations are actually the heritage of the God of Israel, He is the Lord and Judge of the whole earth (cp. Gen. xviii. 25). This verse, however, may with perfect propriety be understood to refer to the personal manifestation of God in Christ.

LXXXIII. This Psalm describes a powerful confederation against the kingdom, the mention of Amalek proving that it belongs to the period before the Captivity, since the Amalekites were destroyed by the Simeonites before that time. Many hold that the confederacy of the Moabites and Ammonites and others, described in 2 Chr. xx. 5-12, gave occasion to the Psalm: nor is it at all impossible that it may have been written by Jahaziel, "a Levite of the sons of Asaph," who was moved by the Spirit of God to promise a complete deliverance (2 Chr. xx. 14-17).

The division is marked by Selah (v. 8): the strophes have four verses, except the last, which has six, expanding the leading thought.

- ^b Ps. 2. 1.
Acts 4. 25.
^c Ps. 81. 15.
- ^d Ps. 27. 5.
^e 31. 20.
^f See Est. 3. 6, 9.
Jer. 11. 19.
& 31. 36.
- ^g See 2 Chr. 20. 1, 10, 11.
- ^h Num. 31. 7.
Judg. 7. 22.
ⁱ Judg. 4. 15, 24.
& 5. 21.
^j 2 K. 9. 37.
Zeph. 1. 17.
^k Judg. 7. 25.
^l Judg. 8. 12, 21.
- ^m Isai. 17.
13. 14.
ⁿ Ps. 35. 5.
- ^o Deut. 32. 22.
- ^p Job 9. 17.
- ^q Ps. 35. 4, 23.
- 2 For, lo, ^bthine enemies make a tumult:
And they that ^chate thee have lifted up the head.
3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people,
And consulted ^dagainst thy hidden ones.
4 They have said, Come, and ^elet us cut them off from *being a nation*;
That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.
5 For they have consulted together with one ^fconsent:
They are confederate against thee:
6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites;
Of Moab, and the Hagarenes;
7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek;
The Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;
8 Assur also is joined with them:
^gThey have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.
- 9 Do unto them as *unto* the ^hMidianites;
As to ⁱSisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison:
10 Which perished at En-dor:
^jThey became as dung for the earth.
11 Make their nobles like ^kOreb, and like Zeeb:
Yea, all their princes as ^lZebah, and as Zalmunna:
12 Who said, Let us take to ourselves
The houses of God in possession.
13 ^mO my God, make them like a wheel;
ⁿAs the stubble before the wind.
14 As the fire burneth a wood,
And as the flame ^osetteth the mountains on fire;
15 So persecute them ^pwith thy tempest,
And make them afraid with thy storm.
16 ^qFill their faces with shame;
That they may seek thy name, O LORD.
17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever;
Yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

¹ Heb. heart.² Heb. they have been an arm to the children of Lot.

2. *lifted up the head*] See Judg. viii. 23. The expression in both passages denotes a revolt.

3. *crafty counsel*] The word implies secrecy. The movement originated among people partially or wholly subject to Judah.

6. *The tabernacles of Edom*] The nomad tribes of Edom: they are named as leaders in the passage of Chronicles (marg. ref.) under the designation of Mount Seir.

Hagarenes] See 1 Chr. v. 10, 18—22. That account explains the reason both of the enmity of the Hagarenes, and of the subordinate position assigned to them here.

7. *Gebal*] A tract of Edom south of the Dead Sea (see Josh. xiii. 5; Ezek. xxvii. 9).

Philistines and Tyrians are named by Amos (i. 6, 9) as allies of Edom in wars against Israel.

8. *Assur*] Assur is mentioned as supporting the confederacy. It is the first indication of any movement of the Assyrian power in support of Moabites and Ammonites. The mention of Assur is conclusive

against the hypothesis of Maccabean date sometimes assigned to the Psalm.

9. The allusions (see marg. ref.) have peculiar fitness in reference to an expected invasion by vast hordes of nomad tribes.

11. Oreb and Zeeb were princes, i.e. nobles, or military commanders; Zebah and Zalmunna kings or sheikhs of Midianite nations (see marg. ref.).

12. *the houses of God*] Or, "the dwellings of God," (as in xliii. 2, pastures, or homesteads); the districts which are the special heritage of God's people. The war had not any special religious character.

13. *wheel*] Or, *whirlwind* (see marg. ref.), an admirable figure of the flight of a panic-stricken army.

14. Or, *As fire consumeth a forest, and as flame burneth mountains.*

16. *That they may seek thy name*] This is a feeling altogether peculiar to God's people. The object of all the judgments which the true Prophet desires is to bring all nations into subjection to God. Their calamities

- 18 *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH,*
Art the most high over all the earth.

* Ps. 59. 13.

* Ex. 6. 3.

* Ps. 92. 8.

PSALM LXXXIV.

To the chief Musician *upon Gittith, A Psalm ¹for the sons of Korah.

* Ps. 8, title.

1 HOW *amiable are thy tabernacles,*

* Ps. 27. 4.

O LORD of hosts!

2 *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD:*
My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

* Ps. 42, 1.

& 63. 1.

& 73. 26.

& 119. 29.

3 *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house,*
And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her
*young,**Even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.*4 *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house:*

* Ps. 65. 4.

*They will be still praising thee. Selah.*5 *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;**In whose heart are the ways of them.*6 *Who passing through the valley ^{2d}of Baca make it a well;*

d 2 Sam. 5.

22, 23.

*The rain also ³filleth the pools.*7 *They go ^{4c}from strength to strength,*
Every one of them in Zion ⁵appeareth before God.

e Prov. 4. 18.

2 Cor. 3. 18.

f Deut. 16. 16.

Zech. 14. 16.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer:

*Give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*9 Behold, ⁶O God our shield,

g Gen. 15. 1.

¹ Or, of.³ make him a well, &c.⁴ Or, from company to company.² Or, of mulberry trees⁵ Heb. covereth.

will be converted into blessings, unless they persist in rebellion.

18. *the most high*] Cp. 2 Chr. xx. 6.

LXXXIV.—This introduces another set of Psalms by the sons of Korah, resembling those in the preceding book, which are attributed to the same authors. Like them (see especially Ps. xlii.), it describes the longing of the Psalmist for the solemnities of the Temple-service; but it is fuller of hope, and appears to have been written when the writer contemplated a speedy restoration to his old avocations. It may belong to the period immediately after the suppression of Absalom's rebellion; or, possibly, to some other period under the kings of Judah; certainly before the Captivity, since the national Sanctuary was standing.

The division of the Psalm into three equal parts, each of four lines, is distinctly marked by Selah, *vr.* 4, 8.

1. *thy tabernacles*] Or, "Thy dwellings;" *i.e.* the Sanctuary, whether Tabernacle or Temple; probably the former; see note on xliii. 3, and cp. cxxxii. 7.

2. *longeth*] Cp. the "earnest desire" of the spirit for "the house from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2).

fainteth] The same word is used of the intense longing of David to see Absalom (2 Sam. xiii. 39).

living God] That was the real object of the longing, the realization of God's Presence,

3. The birds have their houses; my refuge and home, the place in which my heart finds all its comfort, is the Altar of God.

5. *in whose heart*] The meaning appears to be, "in whose heart are the ways to Jerusalem;" *i.e.* blessed are they whose hearts are full of one thought, that they are drawing nearer to God's House. This verse suggested the view that the Psalm was specially composed for pilgrims to the Holy City; but it is appropriate in the mouth of a Levite on his way to the Temple.

6. "The valley of Baca" is either a proper name (see marg.; in favour of which rendering, it is asserted that the "mulberry-tree," or "balsam," grows in dry places); or, probably it means that any valley through which they pass, however dreary and desolate, becomes to them a sweet fountain. The verse may be rendered, "Passing through the valley of weeping they make it a fountain; the early rain clothes it with blessings" (cp. Ezek. xxxiv. 26). They have an inward spring of joy which makes it a place of refreshment, for the favour of God falls on it like the early rain, *i.e.* the autumnal rain of seed-time.

7. *from strength to strength*] The journey instead of exhausting increases their powers.

8. *our shield*] An expression appropriate to David (cp. iii. 3, xxviii. 7, lix. 11).

And look upon the face of thine anointed.

- 10 For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand.

¹I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

^h Isai. 60. 19.

ⁱ Ps. 115. 9.

^k & 119. 114.

Prov. 2. 7.

^k Ps. 34. 9.

ⁱ Ps. 2. 12.

- 11 For the LORD God *is* ^ha sun and ⁱshield :

The LORD will give grace and glory :

^kNo good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

- 12 O LORD of hosts,—ⁱblessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.

PSALM LXXXV.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm ²for the sons of Korah.

^{*} Ps. 42,
title.

- 1 LORD, thou hast been ³favourable unto thy land :

Thou hast ^abrought back the captivity of Jacob.

- 2 ^bThou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people,

Thou hast covered all their sin.

- 3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath :

⁴Thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

- 4 ^cTurn us, O God of our salvation,

And cause thine anger toward us to cease.

- 5 ^dWilt thou be angry with us for ever ?

Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations ?

- 6 Wilt thou not ^erevive us again :

That thy people may rejoice in thee ?

- 7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD,

And grant us thy salvation.

- 8 ^fI will hear what God the LORD will speak :

For ^ghe will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints :

But let them not ^hturn again to folly.

- 9 Surely ⁱhis salvation *is* nigh them that fear him ;

^kThat glory may dwell in our land.

- 10 Mercy and truth are met together ;

^a Ezra 1. 11.

& 2. 1.

Ps. 14. 7.

Jer. 30. 18.

Ezek. 39. 25.

& 31. 23.

Joel 3. 1.

^c Ps. 32. 1.

^d Ps. 80. 7.

^d Ps. 74. 1.

& 79. 5.

& 90. 4.

^e Hab. 3. 2.

^f Hab. 2. 1.

^g Zech. 9. 10.

^h 2 Pet. 2.

20, 21.

ⁱ Isai. 46. 13.

& Zech. 2. 5.

John 1. 14.

¹ Heb. *I would choose rather to sit at the threshold.*

² Or, *of.*

³ Or, *well-pleased*, Ps. 77. 7.

⁴ Or, *thou hast turned thine anger from waxing hot*, Deut. 13. 17.

thine anointed] *i.e.* The king (David and his successors) on whose prosperity depends that of the people. The phrase has its highest meaning in the mouth of the Christian who cares only to be seen and known in Christ.

10. *better than a thousand*] *i.e.* Better than any number elsewhere.

a doorkeeper] See marg. *i.e.* as a servant of the lowest order: the Korahites were "doorkeepers" in the Temple (1 Chr. xxvi. 13-19).

LXXXV. The rapid alternations of thanksgiving and prayer, of thought and feeling in this Psalm are best accounted for on the supposition that it was composed for public recitation shortly after the restoration of the people from Captivity, when gratitude for that blessing was blended with a strong sense of their actual wants and sufferings, feelings which were then absorbed by a sure hope of the future accomplishment of all God's purposes for the redemption and salvation of Israel. The character of the concluding portion of the Psalm is essentially

Messianic. Like other Psalms attributed to the sons of Korah, this bears a striking resemblance to the latter portion of Isaiah.

The structure is peculiar, two strophes of six lines, with an intervening ejaculation, *v. 7.*

4. The rapid and even abrupt change of thought seems to indicate a responsive or alternate recitation; while one half of the singers, representing the people, dwell wholly on the indications of grace and pardon, the other directs the thought to the need of a deep spiritual change in the recipients, which alone can secure the continuance and completion of God's gracious purposes.

8. The Psalmist, as is usual in prophetic writings (see marg. ref.), represents himself as waiting for a Divine answer to the prayers just offered: he then gives the purport of the answer as it is apprehended by his spirit.

to folly] Presumptuous folly, such as that which brought on the visitation.

10. The adaptation of this promise to the

- ¹ Righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.
 11 ^m Truth shall spring out of the earth;
 And righteousness shall look down from heaven.
 12 ⁿ Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good*;
 And ^o our land shall yield her increase.
 13 ^p Righteousness shall go before him;
 And shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

PSALM LXXXVI.

¹ A Prayer of David.

- 1 BOW down thine ear, O LORD, hear me:
 For I *am* poor and needy.
 2 Preserve my soul; for I *am* ² holy:
 O thou my God, save thy servant ^a that trusteth in thee.
 3 ^b Be merciful unto me, O Lord:
 For I cry unto thee ³ daily.
 4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant:
^c For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
 5 ^d For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive;
 And plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
 6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer;
 And attend to the voice of my supplications.
 7 ^e In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee:
 For thou wilt answer me.
 8 ^f Among the gods *there is none* like unto thee, O Lord;
^g Neither *are there any works* like unto thy works.
 9 ^h All nations whom thou hast made
 Shall come and worship before thee, O Lord;
 And shall glorify thy name.
 10 For thou art great, and ⁱ doest wondrous things:
^k Thou art God alone.
 11 ^l Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth:
 Unite my heart to fear thy name.

¹ Or, *A Prayer*, being a Psalm of David.² Or, *one whom thou favour*est.³ Or, *all the day*.

¹ Ps. 72. 3.
 Isai. 32. 17.
 Luke 2. 14.
^m Isai. 45. 8.
ⁿ Ps. 84. 11.
 Jam. 1. 17.
^o Ps. 67. 6.
^p Ps. 89. 14.

^a Isai. 26. 3.^b Ps. 56. 1.
& 57. 1.^c Ps. 25. 1.

& 143. 8.

^d ver. 15.

Ps. 130. 7.

& 145. 9.

Joel 2. 13.

^e Ps. 50. 15.^f Ex. 15. 11.

Ps. 89. 6.

^g Deut. 3. 24.^h Ps. 102. 18.

Isai. 43. 7.

& 77. 14.

ⁱ Deut. 6. 4.

& 32. 39.

Isai. 37. 16.

& 44. 6.

Mark 12. 29.

1 Cor. 8. 4.

Eph. 4. 6.

^k Ps. 25. 4.

& 27. 11.

& 119. 33.

& 143. 8.

work of Christ is obvious; all such promises have an ideal or Messianic character, partly apprehended by the prophetic spirit, and distinctly explained by the event.

11. *truth*] The meaning appears to be, the result of God's faithfulness to His Covenant of grace will be abundance of the fruits of righteousness; in the outward sense, temporal prosperity, in the inner sense, the spiritual gifts and graces which belong to the kingdom of God.

13. *and shall set us in the way of his steps*] Lit. "and shall make His steps a way:" the meaning appears to be that righteousness, preparing the way for the restoration of the Lord's favour, will guide the people in the way marked out by His footsteps, the indications of His will. The personification of the attributes of God, Mercy, Truth and Righteousness, is also a characteristic of the lxxxixth Psalm (see v. 14).

LXXXVI. The expression in the inscription does not always mean authorship, and critics generally agree that we have

here the production of another author, probably an adaptation of the Davidic psalmody to liturgical usage.

The structure resembles that of the preceding Korahite Psalm.

1. This verse contains expressions common in Davidic Psalms (see xvii. 6, xl. 17, lxx. 5). See also v. 8 marg. ref.

2. *holy*] The Hebrew word is equivalent to "saint" in the New Testament (see l. 5 note); but with this difference, that *ἅγιος* in the New Testament is never used of one individual Christian; here it simply expresses the Psalmist's conviction that he is one of God's people, a child of grace.

9. *All nations*] See xxii. 30, 31. The Psalmist's belief in the future conversion of the heathen rests on two grounds, the creation of man by God, and the manifestations of His power.

13. *unite my heart*] A beautiful prayer which includes a heart having no object but God, and a complete unison in all its powers and aspirations.

12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart:

And I will glorify thy name for evermore.

13 For great *is* thy mercy toward me:

And thou hast ^mdelivered my soul from the lowest ¹hell.

^m Ps. 56. 13.
& 116. 8.

ⁿ Ps. 54. 3.

14 O God, ⁿthe proud are risen against me,

And the assemblies of ²violent *men* have sought after my soul;

And have not set thee before them.

^o Ex. 34. 6.
Num. 14. 18.
Neh. 9. 17.
ver. 5.

15 ^oBut thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

16 O ^pturn unto me, and have mercy upon me;

Give thy strength unto thy servant,
And save ^qthe son of thine handmaid.

Ps. 103. 8.
& 111. 4.
& 130. 4, 7.
& 145. 8.

17 Shew me a token for good;

That they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed:

Because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

^p Ps. 25. 16.
& 69. 16.
^q Ps. 116. 16.

PSALM LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song ²for the sons of Korah.

^a Ps. 43. 1.

1 HIS foundation *is* ^ain the holy mountains.

^b Ps. 78. 67.

2 ^bThe LORD loveth the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

^c See Isai.
60.

3 ^cGlorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

^d Ps. 89. 10.
Isai. 51. 9.

4 I will make mention of ^dRahab and Babylon to them that know
me:

Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia;

This *man* was born there.

¹ Or, *grave*.

² Heb. *terrible*.

³ Or, *of*.

13. *from the lowest hell*] Or, *from hell beneath*; "Sheol" (the word in the original), means here as elsewhere the abode of the departed, which is always represented as subterranean, perhaps with special reference to the buried body. The thanksgiving refers to deliverance from some great danger.

16. *the son of thine handmaid*] The Psalmist, like Timothy, owed, perhaps, his first religious impressions and training to his mother's care; the expression may also show that the ground of his hope is that from childhood he has belonged to God's own family, he is His servant by birth.

17. *a token*] A proof of divine favour, not necessarily a miraculous intervention, but help and comfort.

LXXXVII. The Messianic character of this beautiful Psalm, which declares the nature and glory of the Church, and the increase, honour, and comfort of the members thereof, is recognized by all. It bears a close resemblance to the prophecies of Isaiah which describe the future conversion of the bitterest enemies of Zion (ii. 2-4, xi. 10, xviii. xix. 23-25, xx. and xxiii). Hence it has been referred, with great probability, to the time of Hezekiah, but the date is uncertain; it can scarcely have been written after the return from Babylon.

The division into two strophes is marked

by Selah, *vv.* 3, 6; with an ejaculatory verse at the close.

1. The glory of Zion is that God hath founded it, and sanctified the mountains, the several distinct heights on which it is built, by His Presence.

2. *the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*] This clause evidently implies a comparison between Zion and other places, where God had specially manifested Himself, or where the Ark had rested, and it seems consequently to belong to an early period, before the overthrow of Israel and of the old sanctuaries of Shiloh and Bethel.

3. *Glorious...spoken &c.*] Either the old promises and predictions of the eternal duration and future glory of the Holy City, or more probably the declaration of the Almighty in the following verses.

4. These are the words of the Almighty speaking by the Psalmist. Render the passage:

I will name Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon among them that know me &c.

i.e. God will bring about the entire conversion of the oldest and most bitter enemies of Israel, and count them among His own people, who know Him, and are known of Him. Of each converted individual, descended though he be of the accursed Ham, God will say, "This man is born in Zion, admitted to all the privileges of the children

5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her :

And the highest himself shall establish her.

6 'The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people,
That this man was born there. Selah.

* Ps. 22. 30.
† Ezek. 13. 9.

7 As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there :
All my springs are in thee.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm ¹for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath
²Leannoth, ³Maschil of ⁴Heman the Ezrahite.

* 1 K. 4. 31.
1 Chr. 2. 6.

1 O LORD ^aGod of my salvation,
I have ^bcried day and night before thee :

* Ps. 27. 9.

2 Let my prayer come before thee :
Incline thine ear unto my cry ;

* 51. 14.
† Luke 18. 7.

3 For my soul is full of troubles :
And my life ^cdraweth nigh unto the grave.

* Ps. 107. 19.

¹ Or, of.

² Or, A Psalm of Heman

the Ezrahite, giving instruction.

of Israel." This declaration is one of the strongest found in the prophetic writings. It speaks of the free admission of the enemies of Zion to every blessing upon their conversion. The mention of Babylon may point to a time after the exile ; but that city must have been well known to the Psalmist previously as the stronghold of idolatry ; and the Captivity of Judah was predicted by Isaiah (xxxix. 6), and by Micah (iv. 10).

5. *And of Zion*] Or, *And to Zion*. The Psalmist represents the Almighty as presenting every convert to the Holy City, and saying, "This and this, every one is thine own child." Such in fact, is the language of God to the Church, the true Zion, in which alone promises and predictions have perfect fulfilment.

shall establish her] This promise secures the perpetuity of the Church after it has become the home of the converted Gentiles.

6. *when he writeth up*] This is intended to remove all shadow of doubt. God is represented as holding a general census of the Gentile world, and declaring of each individual, who is admitted into covenant, "This man is a true child of Zion, the birth-right is become his."

7. This verse seems to express the joy of the converted Gentiles, who are represented as coming in a procession with singing and choral dancing unto Zion, and there exclaiming "All my fresh springs (i.e. all sources of life and joy) are in Thee."

LXXXVIII. The Bible has no poem which represents personal anguish in language more utterly desponding than this Psalm.

We have the portraiture of an individual (perhaps Uziah, or Hezekiah, or Jeremiah) subjected to every affliction which can try a faithful servant of God.

Heman (see marg. ref.) was a contemporary of Solomon, remarkable with Ethan the Ezrahite for wisdom. Both names are borne also by Levites, who, together with Asaph, were "set over the service of song" in the Sanctuary by David (1 Chr. vi. 33-44).

The supposition that this Psalm was written within a few years after the death of Solomon is in itself probable, and accepted by many. It was a period of severe trial to the sons of Korah ; the disruption of the kingdom, the faithlessness of Rehoboam (2 Chr. xii. 1), followed by the invasion of Shishak, and the total, though temporary, subjection of all Judaea, might well give intensity to anguish connected with personal and long-continued affliction. The familiarity, moreover, of the writer with the Book of Job, though shared by other Psalmists, is peculiarly characteristic of the Solomonian period. Some critics hold that this and the following Psalm were written at the same time.

The structure of the Psalm is irregular a slow unbroken wail, the monotony of woe. The divisions, marked by Selah (vv. 7, 10), are unequal.

The double inscription may possibly be referred to a tradition of doubtful authority. If correct, it may be assumed that the sons of Korah were entrusted with the recitation of the Psalm.

On Mahalath, see Ps. liii. inscription.

Leannoth, i.e. "for singing," or "for humbling," probably means that the Psalm is a Psalm expressive of deep affliction to be recited with a fitting accompaniment.

I have cried day and night] Lit. "day I have cried, by night before Thee." The construction is broken, expressive of the Psalmist's trouble ; he gasps, so to speak, for utterance.

- Ps. 28. 1.
 Ps. 31. 12.
 Isai. 53. 8.
 Ps. 42. 7.
 Job 19. 13, 19.
 Ps. 31. 11.
 & 142. 4.
 Lam. 3. 7.
 Ps. 38. 10.
 Ps. 86. 3.
 Job 11. 13.
 Ps. 143. 6.
 Ps. 6. 5.
 & 30. 9.
 & 115. 17.
 & 118. 17.
 Isai. 38. 18.
 Ps. 143. 3.
 Ps. 31. 12.
 ver. 5.
 Eccl. 8. 10.
 & 9. 5.
 Ps. 5. 3.
 & 119. 147.
 Ps. 143. 2.
 Job 13. 24.
 Ps. 13. 1.
 Job 6. 4.
 Ps. 22. 16.
 I am counted with them that go down into the pit :
 I am as a man *that hath* no strength :
 Free among the dead,—like the slain that lie in the grave,
 Whom thou rememberest no more :
 And they are cut off from thy hand.
 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,—in darkness, in the deeps.
 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,
 And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.
 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me ;
 Thou hast made me an abomination unto them :
 I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.
 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction :
 LORD, I have called daily upon thee,
 I have stretched out my hands unto thee.
 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ?
 Shall the dead arise and praise thee ? Selah.
 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave ?
 Or thy faithfulness in destruction ?
 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark ?
 And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?
 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD ;
 And in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.
 LORD, why castest thou off my soul ?
 Why hidest thou thy face from me ?
 I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up :
 While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.
 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me ;—thy terrors have cut me off.
 They came round about me daily like water ;
 They compassed me about together.

¹ Or, *by thy hand*.

² Or, *all the day*.

5. *Free*] *i.e.* Free from all earthly duties, as a hireling from his master (Job iii. 19; cp. Rom. vi. 7). Others prefer the rendering "dismissed" (*i.e.* from human society). Others would render the passage, "my couch is among the dead" (cp. Job xvii. 13).

Whom thou rememberest no more] In other Psalms (vi. 5, xxx. 9), the suspension of man's power to praise God is dwelt on; but this points to a deeper affliction, the suspension of God's care and remembrance of the dead in "the land of forgetfulness" (v. 12).

6. Each expression in this verse is applied in other passages to the grave, or to Sheol; see Job x. 21 note.

8. The expressions in this verse are all specially applicable to a leper, but may be, and probably ought to be, understood figuratively; the imprisonment, and the inability to go out, imply utter prostration, but (as in the case of Job xxxi. 34) not necessarily external restraint.

10. *the dead*) The Rephaim (see Job xxvi. 5 note). It denotes wan, shadowy, forms of the once mighty dead. The question applies not to a future resurrection, but to the possibility of their rising up in that state to praise God.

11. The accumulation of expressions is noticeable, "the grave" or **sepulchre**; "destruction" or "Abaddon" (as in Job xxvi. 6, xxviii. 22); "the dark" (as in Job x. 21); "the land of forgetfulness," in the twofold sense, where the dead have no remembrance, and where they are wholly forgotten (marg. ref.).

13. The "I" is strongly emphatic, marking a sudden turn of thought; "and yet I have cried" &c.; it represents an earnest expostulation.

prevent] i.e. Anticipate the grace which the morning prayer could not fail to win.

15. *ready to die from my youth up*] Or, "dying from my youth." The word "dying" implies in a dying state, perishing, not merely with reference to the common destiny of man, but as one afflicted with a lifelong malady.

while I suffer &c.] Rather, "I have borne Thy terrors; I am distracted." The last word denotes the effects of long-continued mental anguish, most probably utter exhaustion and confusion of spirit.

16. *Thy fierce wrath*] Lit. "wraths:" the expression represents the overflowing of burning streams.

17. *They*] The floods of wrath.

18 ^aLover and friend hast thou put far from me,
And mine acquaintance into darkness.

^a Job 19. 13.
Ps. 31. 11.
& 38. 11.

PSALM LXXXIX.

¹ Maschil of ^a Ethan the Ezrahite.

^a 1 K. 4. 31.
1 Chr. 2. 6.
^a Ps. 101. 1.

1 ^aI WILL sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever :
With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness ²to all generations.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever :
^bThy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

3 ^cI have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have ^dsworn unto David my servant,

4 ^eThy seed will I establish for ever,
And build up thy throne ^fto all generations. Selah.

5 And ^gthe heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD :
Thy faithfulness also in the congregation ^hof the saints.

6 For ⁱwho in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD ?
Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD ?

7 ^kGod is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,
And to be had in reverence of all *them that are about him.*

8 O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD ^llike unto thee ?
Or to thy faithfulness round about thee ?

9 ^mThou rulest the raging of the sea :
When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

^b Ps. 119. 69.
^c Isai. 42. 1.
^d 2 Sam. 7. 11, &c.
1 Chr. 17. 10, &c.
Jer. 30. 9.
Ezek. 34. 23.
Hos. 3. 5.
^e ver. 29. 36.
^f Luke 1. 32.
^g Ps. 19. 1.
& 97. 6.
Rev. 7. 10.
^h ver. 7.
ⁱ Ps. 40. 5.
& 71. 19.
& 86. 8.
& 113. 5.
^k Ps. 76. 7.
^l Ex. 15. 11.
1 Sam. 2. 2.
Ps. 35. 10.
& 71. 19.
^m Ps. 65. 7.
& 107. 29.

¹ Or, A Psalm for Ethan the Ezrahite, to give in-

struction.
² Heb. to generation and

generation : So ver. 4.
Ps. 119. 90.

18. *And mine acquaintance into darkness*] Or, mine intimates—darkness. The only companion he has to count upon is the darkness of the grave (cp. Job xvii. 14). In connexion with the preceding verses, from v. 13 onwards, it represents the two great characteristics of the Psalm, utter hopelessness of deliverance, and intensity of faith finding expression to the last in prayer.

LXXXIX. Ethan the Ezrahite was the colleague of Asaph and Heman. Supposing the Psalm to have been composed towards the end of his life, some few years after the death of Solomon, every portion of it finds a perfect explanation in the circumstances of the period.

It is written by one closely connected with the king; by a man specially conversant with the divine promises and terms of the Covenant with the family of David. The facts specified in vv. 38, 39 tally exactly with the facts recorded of the invasion of Shishak (2 Chr. xii. 1-12); and the same history also accounts for the tone of hopefulness, which, notwithstanding the terrible suffering, pervades the Psalm.

The metrical system is highly artistic, such as might be expected from a leader of the Levitical choirs in an advanced age. The movement throughout is solemn and majestic.

1. The two words "mercies" and "faithfulness" are the refrain of the Psalm; all

the hope of the people rests on the "sure mercies of David" (Isai. lv. 3), and on "the faithfulness" of God in adhering to His Covenant.

2. Notwithstanding the overthrow of the king's throne (v. 44) it shall be built up and established (v. 4) by God's mercy and faithfulness.

in the very heavens] i.e. Conspicuous as the sun and the moon (see v. 37).

3. *my chosen*] David (1 K. viii. 16).

5. *the congregation of the saints*] The assembly of Angels (as in Job v. 1, xv. 15). In vv. 5-7 the Psalmist refers, with unusual fulness of expression, to the dwellers in heaven. The object is evidently, in the name of the king and of the princes, to declare a formal renunciation of the superstitions into which they had fallen. No mention is here made of false gods, but it is declared that the one office of the heavens and all their hosts is to proclaim the wonders of the Lord, and to acknowledge in reverence and fear His "greatness beyond compare and power Divine."

7. *the assembly of the saints*] i.e. "The council of the Angels." The words "congregation" (v. 5) and "council" differ in so far as the one only describes the act, the other the purpose, of their assembling.

9. *the raging of the sea*] Here, as in numerous passages, representing the wild uproar of invading hosts. Cp. xciii. 3 note.

- * Ex. 14. 20.
Ps. 87. 4.
Isai. 30. 7.
& 51. 9.
° Gen. 1. 1.
1 Chr. 20. 11.
Ps. 24. 1. 2.
& 50. 12.
° Job 26. 7.
° Josh. 19. 23.
° Josh. 12. 1.
- * Ps. 97. 2.
° Ps. 85. 13.
° Num. 10. 10.
& 23. 21.
Ps. 98. 6.
° Ps. 4. 6.
& 44. 3.
- ° ver. 24.
Ps. 75. 10.
& 92. 10.
& 132. 17.
- * ver. 3.
1 K. 11. 34.
° 1 Sam. 16. 1, 12.
- 10 *Thou hast broken ¹Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain ;
Thou hast scattered thine enemies ²with thy strong arm.
- 11 °The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine :
As for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded
- 12 °The north and the south thou hast created them :
°Tabor and °Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.
- 13 Thou hast ³a mighty arm :
Strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand.
- 14 °Justice and judgment *are* the °habitation of thy throne :
°Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.
- 15 Blessed *is* the people that know the °joyful sound :
They shall walk, O LORD, in the °light of thy countenance.
- 16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day :
And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.
- 17 For thou *art* the glory of their strength :
°And in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.
- 18 For °the LORD *is* our defence ;
And the Holy One of Israel *is* our king.
- 19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst,
I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty ;
I have exalted *one* °chosen out of the people.
- 20 °I have found David my servant ;
With my holy oil have I anointed him :

¹ Or, *Egypt*.² Heb. *with the arm of thy strength*.³ Heb. *an arm with might*.⁴ Or, *establishment*.⁵ Or, *our shield is of the*LORD, *and our king is of the Holy One of Israel*, Ps. 47. 9.

10. *Rahab*] See Job ix. 13, xxvi. 12 notes. May not this mystical name for Egypt have been used in this passage, as suggesting the sure overthrow of the invaders of the land, and of the plunderers of the Sanctuary? Hence the special fitness of the words "thine enemies."

12. The mention of Tabor and Hermon may refer to the occupation of the land of which they are the most conspicuous and commanding objects; they will yet rejoice in a perfect deliverance: or, considering that the north and south have been named, they may severally designate the east and west of Palestine.

14. *the habitation*] Or, *foundation*; cp. xcvii. 2.

go before thy face] In the sense of standing in the Presence of God. The two great attributes of the Lord God are personified, thus adumbrating the doctrine to be revealed, Mercy incarnate in the Son, Truth disclosed in the Spirit, that "leadeth into all truth." Cp. Zech. iv. 14.

15. *that know the joyful sound*] See lxxxi. 1 note. The Psalmist refers to the peculiar privileges of Judah, which retained the full Levitical services in the Sanctuary, under the personal superintendence of himself and his two colleagues, Asaph and Heman. This continuous celebration was a pledge of blessing; so long as it was retained the Covenant was valid.

They shall walk] As a result of their devo-

tion they will have the light of God's countenance shining on them (cp. the priestly blessing, Num. vi. 24-26).

17. *the glory of their strength*] With reference, probably, to His Presence over the Ark, with which the word "strength" is specially connected. See xcvi. 6 note.

18. Or, *For our shield belongeth to Jehovah; and our king to the Holy One of Israel*. The "shield" is the king himself, who holds his office, with its powers, as servant of the Lord (see xlvii. 9). This interpretation settles points of great importance, (1) that the Psalm was not written by the king himself; (2) that the kingdom was in existence, and therefore that the Psalm could not belong to the time during or after the exile; (3) that the king was not in captivity but still in Jerusalem, a description which is specially applicable to Rehoboam. The words, "Our shield belongeth to the Lord" may be the reflection of the Psalmist on the fact mentioned in 1 K. xiv. 26.

19. *Then thou spakest*] This introduces another division of the Psalm. The vision is that recorded in 1 Chr. xvii. 3-15. The "holy one" is probably David; but the reading "Thy holy ones" has the authority of many MSS., and of all the ancient Versions.

I have laid help] Cp. xxi. 5: "help" is here chosen with reference to the present need, and to the expression "shield." (v. 18).

- 21 ^bWith whom my hand shall be established :
Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
- 22 ^cThe enemy shall not exact upon him ;
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
- 23 ^dAnd I will beat down his foes before his face,
And plague them that hate him.
- 24 But ^emy faithfulness and my mercy *shall be with him* :
And ^fin my name shall his horn be exalted.
- 25 ^gI will set his hand also in the sea,
And his ^hright hand in the rivers.
- 26 He shall cry unto me, Thou art ⁱmy father,
My God, and ^jthe rock of my salvation.
- 27 Also I will make him ^kmy firstborn,
^lHigher than the kings of the earth.
- 28 ^mMy mercy will I keep for him for evermore,
And ⁿmy covenant shall stand fast with him.
- 29 ^oHis seed also will I make *to endure* for ever,
^pAnd his throne ^qas the days of heaven.
- 30 ^rIf his children forsake my law,—and walk not in my judgments ;
- 31 If they ^sbreak my statutes,—and keep not my commandments ;
- 32 Then ^twill I visit their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
- 33 ^uNevertheless my lovingkindness ^vwill I not utterly take from him,
Nor suffer my faithfulness ^wto fail.
- 34 My covenant will I not break,
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
- 35 Once have I sworn ^xby my holiness
^yThat I will not lie unto David.
- 36 ^zHis seed shall endure for ever,
And his throne ^{aa}as the sun before me.
- 37 It shall be established for ever as the moon,
And as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.
- 38 But thou hast ^{ab}cast off and ^{ac}abhorred,
Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.
- 39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant ;

¹ Heb. *profane my statutes.*² Heb. *I will not make void from him.*³ Heb. *to lie.*⁴ Heb. *if I lie.*

22. *exact upon him*] Come upon him as an exacting creditor ; possibly with a reference to claims asserted by Shishak, founded on Solomon's obligations to his predecessors (see 1 K. ix. 16).

25. A promise claimed with special propriety on behalf of the son of Solomon.

27. *my firstborn*] The expression is applied to Israel (Ex. iv. 22), and then in a special sense to David, as representing Messiah (ii. 7 ; cp. Heb. i. 5, 6).

Higher than &c.] Or, **most high over the kings of the earth.** This very strong term, "most high," implies supremacy and dominion approaching the Divine. Cp. Deut. xxviii. 1.

30. *If his children forsake my law*] Rehoboam did so (2 Chr. xii. 1).

32. *with the rod*] Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 14, "with the rod of men," i.e. with chastisements not

too heavy for human infirmity. In Job xxi. 9, "the rod of God" denotes terrible judgments.

37. *and as a faithful witness in heaven*] Rather, **and the Witness in heaven is faithful**, i.e. God Himself (cp. Job xvi. 19). What God decrees He attests. This is the climax of the whole argument of the Psalmist ; he rests wholly on the faithfulness of God (rv. 1, 49 notes).

38. In contrast to all that is promised comes the description of the actual condition of the king : the object being not to upbraid the Faithful and True, Whose praise will be ever in the Psalmist's mouth (see v. 1), but to shew that the chastisement is complete ; it has done its work. See 2 Chr. xii. 12.

39. *made void*] The Hebrew word occurs elsewhere in Lam. ii. 7 only ; Jeremiah

^b Ps. 80. 17.^c 2 Sam. 7. 10.^d 2 Sam. 7. 9.^e Ps. 61. 7.
ver. 17.^f Ps. 72. 8.
& 80. 11.^g 2 Sam. 7. 14.^h 1 Chr. 22. 10.ⁱ 2 Sam. 22.^j 47.^k Col. 1. 15, 18.^l Num. 24. 7.^m Isai. 55. 3.ⁿ ver. 34.^o ver. 4, 36.^p ver. 4.^q Isai. 9. 7.^r Jer. 33. 17.^s Deut. 11. 21.^t 2 Sam. 7. 14.^u Ps. 119. 53.^v Jer. 9. 13.^w 1 K. 11. 31.^x 2 Sam. 7. 13.^y Amos 4. 2.^z 2 Sam. 7. 16.^{aa} Luke 1. 33.^{ab} John 12. 34.^{ac} Ps. 72. 5, 17.^{ad} Jer. 33. 20.^{ae} 1 Chr. 28. 9.^{af} Ps. 44. 9.^{ag} & 60. 1. 10.^{ah} Deut. 32. 10.^{ai} Ps. 78. 59.

c Ps. 74. 7.
Lam. 5. 16.
d Ps. 80. 12.

e Ps. 44. 13.
& 79. 4.

f ver. 30.

g Ps. 79. 5.
h Ps. 78. 63.
i Job 7. 7.
& 10. 9.
& 14. 1.
Ps. 39. 5.
& 119. 84.
k Ps. 49. 9.
l Heb. 11. 5.

m 2 Sam. 7.
15.
Isai. 55. 3.
n Ps. 54. 5.
o Ps. 69. 9, 19.

p Ps. 74. 22.

q Ps. 41. 13.

'Thou hast profaned his crown *by casting it to the ground.*

40 ^aThou hast broken down all his hedges;
Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.

41 All that pass by the way spoil him:

He is ^aa reproach to his neighbours.

42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries;
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.

43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword,
And hast not made him to stand in the battle.

44 Thou hast made his ^lglory to cease,

And ^fcast his throne down to the ground.

45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened:
Thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

46 ^gHow long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?

^hShall thy wrath burn like fire?

47 ⁱRemember how short my time is:

Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

48 ^kWhat man *is he that* liveth, and shall not ^lsee death?

Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

49 Lord, where *are* thy former lovingkindnesses,
Which thou ^mswarest unto David ⁿin thy truth?

50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants;

^oHow I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the mighty
people;

51 ^pWherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD;

Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

52 ^qBlessed be the LORD for evermore.

Amen, and Amen.

¹ Heb. *brightness.*

often adopts the language of earlier seers.

his crown] The king's crown was profaned when he was reduced to vassalage (2 Chr. xii. 8). Cp. v. 44.

40. Strongholds fortified by Rehoboam, and captured by Shishak, are named in the inscriptions of Karnak.

41. *All that pass by*] Cp. Chr. xii. 3.

43. *turned the edge of his sword*] *i.e.* "turned back his attack." The expressions in this verse imply that no resistance was made in the open field. Such was evidently the case in the Egyptian invasion.

44. *his glory*] Lit. "his purity." The expression implies that the king had contracted defilement, and had been subjected to treatment which degraded him; an account true of Jehoniah, but not less so of Rehoboam.

45. *The days of his youth*] *i.e.* of his youthful vigour (Job xxix. 4). Rehoboam was forty-six years old, still in the prime of life, when the ruin fell upon him. He survived it twelve years (see 2 Chr. xii. 13).

covered him] Clothed him with shame as a mantle (cp. lxxi. 13, cix. 29).

46. *How long, LORD?*] Cp. lxxiv. 10.

hide thyself] Cp. xiii. 1.

burn like fire] Cp. lxxix. 5.

47. The word rendered "time" is used

properly of the brief, frail life of man. The Psalmist speaks in his own person, but probably as representing the race of man.

wherefore... in vain] Some prefer, "for what vanity hast Thou created all men?"

49. *lovingkindnesses... truth*] Rather, as in v. 1, "mercies... faithfulness," the refrain of the Psalmist's expostulation.

50. The general meaning is: The Psalmist bore the revilings of the enemies of Israel as a heavy load upon his heart.

51. *the footsteps of thine anointed*] *i.e.* All the movements of the king; but the word, which means "heels," may imply the retreating movements, the backward steps of the king (cp. v. 43 note).

The Psalm is not directly Messianic; the whole tone belongs to local and temporary circumstances; but the anticipations are grounded on promises which have their true fulfilment in Christ. It is a noble ode, and forms a fitting close to the book which contains the deep teaching of seers trained in the school of David. The concluding words (v. 52), though added to mark the completion of this division, seem to have a special connexion with the beginning of the Psalm, and express the innermost and permanent conviction of the composer.

PSALM XC.

¹A Prayer *of Moses the man of God.

* Deut. 33. 1.

1 LORD, "thou hast been our dwelling place"—²in all generations.

* Ezek. 11. 14

2 ^bBefore the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.^b Prov. 8. 25,
26.3 Thou turnest man to destruction;
And sayest, "Return, ye children of men."

* Gen. 3. 19.

4 "For a thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday ³when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.Eccles. 12. 7.
* 2 Pet. 3. 8.5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; "they are as a sleep :
In the morning ¹they are like grass which ⁴groweth up.* Ps. 73. 26.
/ Ps. 103. 15.6 "In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.Isai. 40. 6.
* Job 14. 2.
Ps. 92. 7.7 For we are consumed by thine anger,
And by thy wrath are we troubled.8 ^bThou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our "secret sins in the light of thy countenance.^b Ps. 50. 21.

Jer. 16. 17.

^c Ps. 19. 12.¹ Or, *A Prayer*, being a
Psalm of *Moses*.² Heb. *in generation and*
generation.³ Or, *when he hath passed*them.
⁴ Or, *is changed*.

XC. The deepest interest attaches to this solemn hymn, through its title, which ascribes it to Moses. There is nothing in the Psalm inconsistent with such authorship: and its general contents, many particular phrases, its resemblance throughout to the books of the Pentateuch, but especially to the book of Deuteronomy, its earnestness, trust, realization of God's nearness, and a melancholy which seems natural in a man of such astonishing experiences and mighty disappointments, fall in with the supposition which general opinion confirms.

1. *dwelling-place*] See Deut. xxxiii. 27. The word seems specially significant: Moses had no fixed dwelling-place for forty years.

2. Or, "Before the mountains, which are the emblems of eternity and strength (Deut. xxxiii. 15; Gen. xlix. 26), were brought forth and born (Job xxxviii. 8, 28); before the earth and the world in which we live and move were born (see Gen. ii. 4); from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."

3. According to the marg. refl. the meaning is, "Thou turnest man to destruction (i.e. to dust and corruption), and sayest, Return to dust, ye children of dust." Some prefer, "Thou turnest man to dust, and sayest to another generation, Return to life, and occupy for a time" (see Eccles. i. 4), as contrasting the eternity of God and man's changing existence.

4. *when it is past*] Rather, "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday, for it passes, or, as it passes;" i.e. "for a thousand years pass away to Thee as one day: for it passes, or, as it passes (so to say), in an instant; as a

watch in the night passes momentarily in sleep." The words in the original express rapidity.

a watch in the night] A space of time shorter than the day or night. The night, commencing at six o'clock, was divided in early times into three, afterwards into four, watches (Judg. vii. 19; Mark xiii. 35).

5, 6. Images introduced to mark man's frail nature.

7. The Psalmist turns to speak particularly of the weakness and sin of himself and his people, and of the wrath of God, of which sin was the cause. The complaint seems specially suited to the experience of Moses. He and his people, on account of their sin, were "consumed" in the wilderness, and "troubled" through God's wrath; for all of them, except Caleb and Joshua, perished before their time, and lost the inheritance promised to their fathers (see Deut. i. 35-38). The words in the original for God's "anger" and "wrath" are constantly coupled in Deuteronomy.

8. i.e. "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, so as to mark each one individually, and recollect it: our secret sins (lit. secrets), which we would gladly conceal from ourselves, Thou hast put in the splendour which surrounds Thy countenance, so that Thou Thyself, and all creation, may note each and every one of them." God has placed the sins of the Psalmist and of His people in the midst of the blaze of light which encompasses Him, and uncovers all things everywhere. The words have a singular force from Moses, who saw the splendour of God, and carried away from

- 9 For all our days are ¹passed away in thy wrath:
We spend our years ²as a tale *that is told*.
- 10 ³The days of our years are threescore years and ten;
And if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years,
Yet is their strength labour and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
- 11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger?
Even according to thy fear, *so is thy wrath*,
- * Ps. 39. 4. 12 ⁴So teach us to number our days,
That we may ⁴apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.
- 13 Return, O LORD, how long?
And let it ⁴repent thee concerning thy servants.
- ¹ Deut. 32. 36. Ps. 135. 14. 14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
² Ps. 85. 6. & 149. 2. ²That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
- 15 Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted
us,
And the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
- * Hab. 3. 2. 16 Let ²thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto their children.
- ¹ Ps. 27. 4. 17 ¹And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us:
² Isai. 26. 12. And ²establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.
- ¹ Heb. *turned away*. ² Heb. *As for the days of our years, in them are* ³ *seventy years*.
² Or, *as a meditation*. ⁴ Heb. *cause to come*.

His Person its manifest tokens (Ex. xxxiv. 29).

9. The complaint is of the shortness and misery of life through God's wrath. Moses saw a generation of men perish before their time in a few years, and multitudes perish in a moment by special interposition of God. The word rendered "passed away" means (see the marg.) "have turned" as the day turns at evening. A quick, unexpected, invisible passing is imaged. The comparison which follows of the years of life to "a tale that is told," or to a word, whisper, sigh, or thought, which is spoken, heard, or imagined for a moment, and leaves no trace, is of similar import.

10. *yet is their strength*] Or, *their pride*, that which is best in each, *i.e.* youth, beauty, strength, or glory.

This lament over the shortness of life, and its limitation to seventy or eighty years, is thought to be inconsistent with the supposition that Moses wrote the Psalm. Moses lived 120 years, Aaron 123 years, Miriam longer. The average duration of life in that generation with which Moses lived in the wilderness was, however, probably lower than that specified in the Psalm. And the Psalmist is not speaking of an exceptional average, as that of people whose lives were miraculously shortened, but of the general lot of man, and of his average life as shortened by Divine ordinance.

11. *i.e.* "Who understands practically and for life's guidance, what Thine anger is? Who understands the terror of Thy wrath, in a way that a just fear of Thee, a

fear suitable to Thy majesty and holiness, should impart."

12. Rather, "Teach us *so* to number our days; and *we shall obtain a heart of wisdom*!" "So," *i.e.* rightly, in accordance with a just fear of Thee, and appreciation of Thy displeasure (v. 11): "obtain," in the sense of "gathering in" and "bringing in" a plentiful harvest (2 Sam. ix. 10; Hag. i. 6).

13. Rather, *Turn, O Lord!* *i.e.* from Thy fierce anger: *repent* (of this evil, Ex. xxxii. 12), or, *show compassion* towards Thy servants. "How long will it be ere Thou dost turn?"

14. *early*] Or, *in the morning* of a new day of mercy and hope.

15. *i.e.* "Make us to rejoice for a time, bearing some proportion to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us," &c.

The poetical form of the words signifying "days" and "years" occurs only here and in Deuteronomy.

16. *i.e.* "Let Thy power and majesty be seen, as oftentimes, and exerted for the deliverance of Thy people!" Jehovah's work (Deut. xxxii. 4) is the performance of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the establishment of His people in Canaan. This latter work was to be accomplished through the instrumentality of men (v. 17; cp. with Deut. ii. 7, iv. 28, xiv. 29).

17. *beauty* &c.] *i.e.* "May the grace, and favour, and loveliness of God: may all that in Him is beautiful, endearing, and engaging, be shewn to us, who have experienced His severity and justice!"

PSALM XCI.

- 1 HE ^athat dwelleth in the secret place of the most High
Shall ^babide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 ^cI will say of the LORD, *He is my refuge and my fortress:*
My God; in him will I trust.
3 Surely ^dhe shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
And from the noisome pestilence.
4 ^eHe shall cover thee with his feathers,
And under his wings shalt thou trust:
His truth *shall be thy shield and buckler.*
5 ^fThou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
Nor for the arrow *that flieth* by day;
6 Nor for the pestilence *that walketh* in darkness;
Nor for the destruction *that wasteth* at noonday.

^a Ps. 27. 5.
& 31. 20.
& 32. 7.
^b Ps. 17. 8.
^c Ps. 142. 5.

^d Ps. 124. 7.

^e Ps. 17. 8.
& 61. 4.

^f Job 5. 19.
Ps. 112. 7.
& 121. 6.
Prov. 3. 23,
24.
Isai. 43. 2.

¹ Heb. *lodge*.

The cloud which hung over the Psalm in its opening portion is partially removed towards its close. That intense confidence in God which is characteristic of Moses the servant of God through his varied history, breaks forth. It has been remarked that this Psalm is like the pillar of fire and cloud which led the march of Israel: it is dark and bright: it is dark as it looks in sorrowful retrospect upon man; it is bright as it is turned in hope and confidence to God.

XCI. This Psalm, like most of those contained in the fourth book, bears no inscription in the Hebrew. In common with Pss. xcii. and xciii. it seems to have been designed for liturgical use. Some have assigned it to Moses, others to David, but as regards its peculiar phraseology it has a close resemblance to the Book of Job.

The fundamental idea of the Psalm is an expansion of the idea expressed by S. Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The repeated changes of person may be most simply explained by the supposition that the Psalm was composed as a pilgrim song, and that it consists of the alternate responses of two voices (see v. 2 note). Its principal division into two parts is clearly marked by the refrain of v. 9.

Although the Psalm has numerous references to earlier compositions, it is one of the most original and beautiful in the Psalter, and, in common with many of the Psalms contained in this book, it resembles in style the second part of the prophecies of Isaiah.

1. **Rather, He that dwelleth in the covert of the Most High—(that) abideth under the shadow of the Almighty.** Both clauses of the verse describe, in accordance with one of the most common forms of Hebrew parallelism, the character of the man who is the object of the Divine protection. The allusion (cp. v. 4) is probably to the overshadowing wings of the Cherubim in the most Holy Place, rather than to the shelter from heat and storm af-

forded to the traveller by the rock-hewn caves of Palestine.

2. **The key-note of the Psalm being struck in v. 1, this verse gives the response of the second voice.** To those who trust in Him, God reveals Himself not only as "Most High" (Elyon) and "Almighty" (Shaddai, v. 1), but also as "LORD" (Jehovah), the Covenant-God of His believing people (Ex. vi. 3).

3. **Surely he &c.]** The "He" is emphatic. These words begin the response of the first voice, assigning the ground of the confidence just expressed.

from the snare of the fowler] Cp. marg. ref., where the same figure occurs with reference to the men who rose up against Israel. Spiritually, the promise applies to deliverance from "the snare of the devil" (cp. 2 Tim. ii. 26).

from the noisome pestilence] Rather, **from the pestilence of malignity.** The original of the second noun is plural, which gives it a comprehensive meaning.

4. **The verb occurs with reference to the Ark as concealed by the veil (Ex. xl. 3), and to the Cherubim as covering the Mercy-seat with their wings (1 K. viii. 7; Ezek. xxviii. 14, 16; cp. Matt. xxiii. 37).**

shalt thou trust] Rather, "thou shalt take refuge" (cp. lvii. 1).

his truth shall be thy shield and buckler] Or, "shield and buckler is His truth." The word rendered "shield" denotes the large shield which protected the whole body (cp. v. 12; Eph. vi. 16).

5. **terror by night**] Perils from robbers and beasts of prey to which Eastern travellers are exposed by night.

the arrow] Either God's arrow (see Deut. xxxii. 23, 24), as e.g. the pestilence, or any noxious influence, such as the Sirocco which is said to prevail most commonly in the day-time; or, it may be the arrow of the enemy, i.e. any hostile assault. The sixth verse may be regarded as explanatory, on the principle of parallelism, of the fifth, or as illustrative of its meaning.

- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand,
But it shall not come nigh thee.
- 8 Only ^awith thine eyes shalt thou behold and see
The reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* ^amy refuge,
Even the most High, ^bthy habitation;
- 10 ^cThere shall no evil befall thee,
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
- 11 ^dFor he shall give his angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
- 12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands,
^eLest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and ^faddor:
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
- 14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver
him:
- ^g I will set him on high, because he hath ^hknown my name.
- 15 ⁱHe shall call upon me, and I will answer him:
^jI will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him, and ^khonour him.
- 16 With ^llong life will I satisfy him,—and shew him my salvation.

¹ Or, *asp.*² Heb. *length of days*, Prov. 3. 2.

7. Lit. "There shall fall on thy side (*i.e.* thy left hand) a thousand, and ten thousand on thy right hand; to thee it shall not come nigh." The singular number ("*it* shall not come nigh") is expressive of the security of the righteous man from each and every form of the dangers and evils enumerated. The promise has its spiritual fulfilment, whether the temporal danger be averted, or whether grace and strength sufficient for the day be vouchsafed. The man who keeps Christ's saying never sees death, because for him the sting of death is extracted. Cp. John viii. 51, 52; 1 Cor. xv. 55-57.

8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold*] Cp. the fact in Ex. xiv. 30.
reward] Or, "recompence" (Isai. xxxiv. 8).

9. Or, **For Thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge: thou hast made the Most High thy habitation.** The first clause refers to v. 2, and seems to be the refrain of the second voice, in which case the second clause of the verse will be the response of the first voice.

10. The word rendered "evil" denotes any calamity, whatever its origin, or its nature. The word rendered "plague" is one which is commonly used to denote the stroke of God's hand, as leprosy, pestilence, &c.

thy dwelling] Lit. **thy tent.** The word comports well with the general complexion of the Psalm as a pilgrim Psalm.

11. *his angels*] The promise of angelic guardianship is here (as in xxxiv. 7) given to all who trust in the Lord.

over thee] Or, "with respect to," *i.e.* for thy benefit (see Heb. i. 14).

in all thy ways] Cp. Ex. xxiii. 20. When Satan applied this verse of the Psalm to our Lord in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 6), he omitted the words "in all thy ways," as not suitable to his purpose.

12. *in their hands*] upon **their hands.** As the eagle is represented (Deut. xxxii. 11), bearing its young "on her wings," so the Angels, the flying ones (cp. Isai. vi. 6; Dan. ix. 21; Rev. viii. 13, xiv. 6), are here described as lifting up the righteous "upon their hands" or pinions.

Lest thou dash thy foot &c.] Cp. Prov. iii. 23. The figure is in harmony with the view taken that this Psalm is a pilgrim Psalm.

13. In the narrow mountain-passes of the East, obstacles can often be overcome in no other manner than by walking over them. Figuratively, the assaults of open violence are fitly represented by the fury of the lion, whilst those of secret malice are as fitly represented by the venomous bite of the serpent. Cp. Matt. iv. 1-11; Rom. xvi. 20.

14. *set his love upon*] Lit. "take pleasure in." The word is used in Deut. vii. 7, x. 15 to denote God's delight in His people. Here, the delight of God's people in Him is represented as drawing forth the fulfilment of His promises made to them.

he hath known my name] *i.e.* My Covenant-name, Jehovah (v. 2 note).

15. *and honour him*] Because he honours God by reposing all his confidence in Him.

16. *With long life*] Or, as in the marg. See xxi. 4 note. A long life in the land of pro-

PSALM XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.

- 1 *IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD,*
And to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: * Ps. 147. 1.
- 2 *To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,*
And thy faithfulness every night, * Ps. 89. 1.
- 3 *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery;*
Upon the harp with a solemn sound. * 1 Chr. 23. 5.
Ps. 33. 2.
- 4 *For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work:*
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
- 5 *O LORD, how great are thy works!*
And thy thoughts are very deep. * Ps. 40. 5.
* 139. 17.
* Isai. 28. 29.
- 6 *A brutish man knoweth not;*
Neither doth a fool understand this. Rom. 11. 33,
34.
/ Ps. 73. 22.
* Ps. 8.
- 7 *When the wicked spring as the grass,*
And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever: * Job 12⁶.
* 21. 7.
Jer. 12. 1.
Mal. 3. 15.

¹ Heb. *in the nights.*² Or, *upon the solemn sound with the harp.*³ Heb. *Higgaion*, Ps. 9. 16.

mise was the reward of obedience to the requirements of God's Law (cp. Ex. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16). But the words here, and elsewhere, require a larger and a spiritual interpretation, as looking forward to that eternal life of which a long life in the land of Canaan was the type and the pledge.

and shew him my salvation] *i.e.* Cause him to behold it with complete satisfaction (cp. 1. 23). To live to see the final glory was the rapturous thought of the Old Testament hope, and, in the Apostolic age, of the New Testament hope also.

XCII. The title of this Psalm seems to imply that it was used in the Temple-services on the Sabbath-day. It was sung, we are told, in the morning at the time of the drink-offering of the first lamb, and also on the second day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It has been disputed, however, whether the Psalm refers to the Sabbath of Creation, or to the final Sabbath of the world's history. S. Athanasius describes its subject as the rest which remains for the faithful. The Sabbath number is preserved in the seven-fold recurrence of the word Jehovah. The theme is the faithfulness and truth of God as displayed in His righteous administration of the universe, and as vindicated by the ultimate destiny both of the righteous and of the wicked. The chief points of difference between this and other Psalms in which the same subject is treated are (1), that whereas they, for the most part (Pss. i. xxxvii. lxxiii.), teach the equity of God's providential government dogmatically, this proclaims it in a song of thanksgiving; and (2), whereas elsewhere, especially in Ps. lxxiii., the inequality in the present administration of God's providence is a source of perplexity, this Psalm seems to have its standing-point in a dispensation in which

we shall no longer "see through a glass darkly," and in which the promise, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," shall have received its fulfilment. In this as in xci. 1, God is spoken of as Elyon, "Most High;" and both Psalms employ the sacred name of Jehovah.

1. *to sing praises*] The word means either to "sing" or "play upon an instrument." It is used also to denote the accompaniment of the song with instrumental music.

4. *work...works*] Different words in the Hebrew. The former is frequently used of God's works or dispensations in providence (xliv. 1, xc. 16). The latter is a more common word, and includes the works of creation (viii. 6, cxliii. 5).

6. *A brutish man*] *i.e.* Man in his rude, uncultivated state, as by nature.

a fool] Lit. "one fat or fleshy." This word, of frequent occurrence in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, is found only in two other places in the Psalms (xlix. 10, xciv. 8). In both cases it is in conjunction with the word rendered "brutish." Both words are opposed to the truly wise, *i.e.* righteous man, who rightly considers God's works. The Psalms frequently refer to the elevating influences of spiritual intuition as constituting the true distinction between the natural man (*ψυχικός*) and the spiritual man (*πνευματικός*).

7. In Eastern countries the grass, beneath the influence of heavy rains and a hot sun, soon attains maturity, and is as quickly scorched and withered. Cp. xxxvii. 35, 36, where the coincidence of thought is striking, but the phraseology is different.

It is that they shall be destroyed] *i.e.* that they are fast ripening for destruction (cp. lxii. 9).

for ever] In the Hebrew a peculiar expres-

- ^a Ps. 56. 2.
& 83. 18.
- 8 ^aBut thou, LORD, *art most high* for evermore.
- 9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD,
For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall ¹be scattered.
- ⁱ Ps. 68. 1.
& 89. 10.
^k Ps. 89. 17,
24.
^l Ps. 23. 5.
^m Ps. 54. 7.
& 59. 10.
& 112. 8.
- 10 But ^kmy horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of an unicorn* :
I shall be ^lanointed with fresh oil.
- 11 ^mMine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies,
And mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up
against me.
- ⁿ Ps. 52. 8.
Isai. 65. 22.
Hos. 14. 5, 6.
- 12 ⁿThe righteous shall flourish like the palm tree :
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
- 13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish ^oin the courts of our God.
- ^o Ps. 100. 4.
& 135. 2.
- 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ;
They shall be fat and ¹flourishing ;
- 15 To shew that the LORD is upright :
^pHe is my rock, and ^qthere is no unrighteousness in him.
- ^r Deut. 32. 4.
^q Rom. 9. 14.
- ¹ Heb. *green*.

sion, found only in two other Psalms (lxxxiii. 17, cxxxii. 12, 14) and twice in Isaiah.

8. *art most high*] Or, "art (throned) on high" (cp. xciii. 4). This verse, standing in the middle of the Psalm, contains the central truth which is enforced throughout it. This truth is the prop of the righteous man's faith, however the people may rage.

9. *For, lo, thine enemies*] The word rendered "lo" seems to point with a finger of scorn to the workers of iniquity and to their end. Cp. Luke xix. 27. The repetition of the words adds force to this passage.

shall be scattered] The word may mean simply dispersed (Job iv. 11), or it may mean separated, i.e. from the congregation of the righteous, as the chaff is separated by winnowing from the wheat (cp. Matt. xiii. 30, xxv. 32; Dan. ii. 35).

10. Rather, "But my horn hast thou exalted as that of an aurochs (or wild ox)." See Job xxxix. 9 note. The height of the horn was the measure of the real or imaginary greatness of the wearer.

The expression "I shall be anointed with fresh oil" denotes ease, refreshment, and health. The importance of extracting the oil before the berry becomes black, and consequently of gathering the fruit at the proper time, is well known. It is thought best to carry the fruit to the press as soon as it is gathered and cleaned. The word rendered "fresh," which is commonly used of the tree and translated "green," is, in this place only, used of its oil.

11. *mine enemies*] Rather, "those who lie in wait for me." This form of the word does not occur elsewhere.

12. The palm-tree of the Oasis is remarkable for its erect growth, notwithstanding the quantity and weight of its produce, its perpetual verdure, its power of putting

forth young shoots even in old age, and the distance of its foliage from the earth. Growing, as it does, in places where no other tree is found, it is an image of life in the midst of surrounding death. And as the date-palm of the desert is remarkable for its vital energy, so is the cedar of Lebanon for its stately and gigantic growth. The cedar is a lofty, long-lived, wide-spreading, and deeply-rooted tree. Its wood is fragrant and almost imperishable. A few of the cedars of mount Lebanon still remain, and young trees in the East are as rare as ruins in the West.

13. It is thought by some that certain trees were planted in the courts of the Temple; and it appears not improbable, considering the heat of the climate, that the court of the Tabernacle, and afterwards the courts of the Temple, were partially shaded by the foliage of trees (cp. lii. 8). The righteous are like trees planted in a good soil. The wicked man, on the contrary, is compared to a tree growing in its own soil. He is indigenous (see i. 3, xxxvii. 35 notes.)

14. *bring forth fruit &c.*] Or, "shall be vigorous," or "in full vital energy."
fat and flourishing] i.e. "Full of sap and rich in verdure" (the same word as "fresh" in v. 10). The words throughout are in allusion probably to the vital energy and productiveness of the date-palm, and to the perpetual verdure of that tree, and also of the cedar (v. 12).

15. *To shew &c.*] This verse looks back to v. 2. The verb rendered in v. 2 "to shew forth," and here "to shew," is the same. The "no unrighteousness" of this verse is the exact equivalent of the "faithfulness" of v. 2; the two words being the direct opposites of each other.

PSALM XCIII.

- 1 THE ^aLORD reigneth, ^bhe is clothed with majesty;
 The LORD is clothed with strength, ^cwherewith he hath girded himself:
^dThe world also is established, that it cannot be moved.
- 2 ^eThy throne *is* established ^fof old:
 Thou *art* from everlasting.
- 3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
 The floods have lifted up their voice;
 The floods lift up their waves.
- 4 ^gThe LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters,
 Yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.
- 5 Thy testimonies are very sure:—holiness becometh thine house,
 O LORD, ^hfor ever.

^a Ps. 96. 10.
^b 97. 1.
^c 99. 1.
^d Isai. 52. 7.
^e Ps. 104. 1.
^f Ps. 65. 6.
^g Ps. 98. 10.
^h Ps. 46. 6.
 Prov. 8. 22,
 &c.

ⁱ Ps. 65. 7.
 & 80. 9.

PSALM XCIV.

- 1 O LORD ^aGod, ^bto whom vengeance belongeth;
 O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, ^cshew thyself.

^a Deut. 32. 35.
 Nah. 1. 2.

¹ Heb. *from then*.

² Heb. *to length of days*.

³ Heb. *God of revenges*.

⁴ Heb. *shine forth*, Ps. 80. 1.

XCIII. This Psalm has no superscription in the Hebrew. In the LXX. the title is "For the day preceding the Sabbath, when the world had been peopled or established. A song of praise by David." The former part of the title agrees with the tradition which regards this as the Friday's Psalm, because God on the 6th day had finished His work, and had begun to reign over His creatures. Whatever historical allusions may be contained in v. 3 (see note) to the past or present assaults of the world-powers upon Israel, this Psalm, the first of a series of theocratic Psalms, anticipates the period of Jehovah's personal manifestation of Himself as the King of the whole earth (cp. Rev. xi. 15, 17, xix. 6).

1. *The LORD reigneth*] Rather, "Jehovah is King," i.e. He now reigns; His kingdom is visibly established, His foes being made His footstool. The Theocracy had its first manifestation when Jehovah became the King of Israel (Ex. xv. 18), and it will receive its completion when the King of Israel becomes the King of a whole world subdued, both outwardly and inwardly, to Himself. The verb rendered "is (now) King" is here used in reference to the inauguration of the Theocracy in its final and complete manifestation. This is the watchword of the theocratic Psalms (cp. xcvi. 10, xcvii. 1, xcix. 1).

The LORD is clothed &c.] Rather, "Jehovah is clothed, He is girded with strength."

The world also is established] Or, "therefore the world is firmly established." The word rendered "world" corresponds to ἡ οἰκουμένη (Luke ii. 1; Heb. i. 6), and has special reference to the world as inhabited. Having become the seat of Jehovah's kingdom, the world can no longer be shaken by the combined opposition of earth and hell.

2. *Thy throne is established of old*] The

transition is abrupt, and brings into fuller view the predictive import of this series of Psalms as referring to some future and signal manifestation of the sovereignty of Jehovah. The clause may be interpreted, however, as denoting the certainty of Messiah's reign over a subjugated earth.

3. *The floods have lifted up*] The sea, with its foaming and dashing waves, is a fitting emblem of the powers of the world as arrayed in opposition to the kingdom of God. The three great world-powers by which the Israelites were successively oppressed are typically denoted by the three great rivers, the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates.

their waves] Or, "roaring;" primarily "collision," "dashing," and hence the din or noise produced by the breakers. The change of tense ("lift" following "lifted") is significant, as denoting the continuance of the threatened dangers. Such a transition is natural if the Psalm was composed in the time of Hezekiah.

4. This verse may be rendered thus: "More mighty than the voice of waters many (and) mighty, (than) the breakers of the sea, is Jehovah (throned) on high."

5. The abruptness of the transition causes a difficulty in tracing the connexion of thought. The meaning probably is that the glory of Jehovah which is now manifested in the vindication of His attributes of truth and holiness will be more fully revealed hereafter when He shall take to Himself His great power, and reign over a world reduced outwardly and inwardly into submission to His sceptre. There is a similar transition in xix. 7 from God's works to His word, and a striking verbal coincidence between that verse and this.

XCIV. This Psalm also is without title in the Heb. The inscription in the LXX.

- 13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity,
Until the pit be digged for the wicked.
- 14 "For the LORD will not cast off his people,
Neither will he forsake his inheritance. * 1 Sam. 12. 22.
- 15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness:
And all the upright in heart shall follow it. Rom. 11. 1, 2.
- 16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?
Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
- 17 "Unless the LORD had been my help,
My soul had almost dwelt in silence. * Ps. 121. 1, 2.
- 18 When I said, "My foot slippeth;
Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up. * Ps. 38. 16.
- 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.
- 20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee,
Which frameth mischief by a law? * Amos 6. 3.
- 21 "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous,
And condemn the innocent blood. * Ps. 58. 2.
- 22 But the LORD is 'my defence;
And my God is the rock of my refuge. Isai. 10. 1.
- 23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity,
And shall cut them off in their own wickedness;
Yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off. * Matt. 27. 1.

PSALM XCV.

1 O COME, let us sing unto the LORD:

"Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

¹ Heb. shall be after it.

² Or, quickly.

* Ps. 100. 1.

^b Deut. 32. 15.

² Sam. 22. 47.

when the Law of God was in the hands of the writer. The Law was known to Hezekiah (2 K. xviii. 6).

13. *That thou mayest give him rest &c.* [i.e. "so that he shall not be disturbed by the days of evil,"

Until] The word "until" denotes the inevitableness of the doom reserved for the wicked, though "sentence against his evil work" is not always "executed speedily" (Eccles. viii. 11).

14. This is the answer to the inquiry contained in v. 3. The words "His people" and "His inheritance" point back to v. 5. St. Paul (marg. ref.) argues the point nationally as regards the Jews, and affirms that "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew."

15. The meaning seems to be that righteousness must eventually triumph over present injustice, and then all honest-hearted men will rejoice in the attainment of that which has been long yearned after.

16. The Psalmist sees no refuge in man, and turns only to God (cp. xcii. 9-11). The verse may also be understood prophetically of the time of the final vindication of the Divine administration spoken of in the preceding verse.

17. *had almost dwelt in silence*, i.e. the silence of the grave (cp. cxv. 17).

18. *When I said*] Or, "Though I have said," i.e. if in time of danger and apparent desertion I have said, "My foot tottereth," the compassion of Jehovah has sustained me.

19. *my thoughts*] "My cares," or "anxieties," or "distractions" (cp. cxxxix. 23).

20. There can be no fellowship between Jehovah's throne of righteousness (xciii. 2) and the judgment-seat of unrighteousness, which executes oppression "by a law," or by a decree, i.e. under the semblance of the administration of justice.

21. *the righteous &c.*] The word "righteous" is in the singular. Whether these words be distinctly Messianic or not, they received their literal accomplishment in the history of our Lord (cp. marg. ref.).

22. *the rock of my refuge*] Cp. xviii. 2. The word rendered "defence" in this verse is there rendered "high tower."

23. *And he shall bring &c.*] Rather, "He has turned back upon them," denoting the certainty of the righteous retribution.

in their own wickedness] Rather, "by (or through) their own wickedness." The workers of iniquity (vv. 4, 16) are here represented as having fallen into the pit which they have dug for others. The repetition of the words "shall cut them off" adds emphasis to the prediction (cp. v. 1, xcii. 9).

XCV. This Psalm bears internal evidence

- 2 Let us ¹come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
- 3 For ^cthe LORD is a great God,—and a great King above all
gods.
- 4 ²In his hand are the deep places of the earth :
³The strength of the hills is his also.
- 5 ⁴The sea is his, and he made it :
And his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 O come, let us worship and bow down :
Let ^{us}kneel before the LORD our maker.
- 7 For he is our God ;—and ^{we}are the people of his pasture,
And the sheep of his hand.
- ⁵To day if ye will hear his voice,
- 8 Harden not your heart, ^{as}in the ⁵provocation,
And as in the day of temptation in the wilderness :
- 9 When ^{your}fathers tempted me,
Proved me, and ^{saw}my work.
- 10 ¹Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation,
And said, It is a people that do err in their heart,
- ¹ Heb. *present his face.* ³ Or, *the heights of the hills* ⁴ Heb. *Whose the sea is,*
² Heb. *In whose.* ⁵ Heb. *contention.*

of having been composed as an anthem for the Temple-worship, and probably on some special occasion. It is entitled by the LXX. "A Psalm of David," and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (iii. 7-11, iv. 3-7) uses the expression "in David" with reference to it; but this probably implies no more than that the words in question are a quotation from the Book of Psalms, of which David was, to a considerable extent, the author. The phraseology, as the Psalm now stands, does not appear to be that of David, though it is quite possible that, in its original form, it may have proceeded from him. The principal Jewish writers interpret Psalms xcv.-c. of the Messiah: and this Psalm is one of the Friday evening Psalms in the synagogue service. It has been used from a remote period in the daily services of the Western Churches, as in our own, in which it has been generally known as the Invitatory Psalm, a designation evidently derived from the invitations to the worship of God contained in *vr.* 1, 2, and 6, but perhaps not without reference to the fact that the Sabbath is regarded by the Jews as "the Bride," whom by the use of this Psalm at the beginning of the Sabbath, they are supposed to go out to meet (*cp. vr.* 2). The Psalm consists of two clearly defined portions; (1) an invitation to praise in grateful acknowledgement of God's mercies; (2) a solemn warning against the sins of disbelief and disobedience, applicable, primarily, to the Jewish Church and nation, and to the Christian Church also (*Heb.* iii. 7 &c.).

1. *let us sing*] "Exult," or "shout joyfully." In *vr.* 1, 6 outward expression of worship is required in the utterance of "the voice and the bowing of the knees."

2. *Let us come before his presence*] Rather,

"Let us go forth to meet Him," i.e. anticipate His Presence (see marg.). *Cp.* lvii. 8.

4. *deep places*] Or, "unsearchable, unexplored recesses;" here probably the lower places of the earth as contrasted with the higher places (see marg.) of the second clause.

6. *worship*] The word means "prostrate oneself upon the earth," in accordance with the Oriental mode of adoration.

our maker] Comparison with *Deut.* xxxii. 15, 18, seems to warrant the inference that it is to the constitution or adoption of Israel as the people of the Lord rather than to the literal creation of man that both Moses and the Psalmist have reference.

7. *For he is our God*] The argument reaches its climax in the personal relationship of God to His people as their Covenant-God. *Cp.* xlviii. 14. The identity of Jehovah as the Great King, with the Covenant-Angel, Who went before the Israelites (*cp.* *Ex.* xxiii. 20-23), seems to be clearly implied in this verse. Hence, an argument for the worship of Christ as the Angel of the Old Covenant with outward and inward homage is derived from this Psalm.

To day &c.] Or, "This day." Often as they were faithless the "to-day" sounded ever anew.

hear] Rather, "listen to," or "obey."

8. *as in the provocation &c.*] Rather, *as at Meribah; as in the day of Massah* (see marg. *reff.*)

9. *and saw*] Or, "even though they saw."

10. *Forty years long*] In *Heb.* iii. 9 these words are connected with the preceding clause, but in *iii.* 17 they denote, as here, the time during which God was grieved, or, "moved with indignation."

10. *a people that do err in their heart*] Lit.

And they have not known my ways:

- 11 Unto whom ^mI swear in my wrath
¹That they should not enter into my rest.

^m Num. 14.
 23, 28, 30.

PSALM XCVI.

& 4, 3, 5.

- 1 O ^aSING unto the LORD a new song:
 Sing unto the LORD, all the earth.
 2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name;
 Shew forth his salvation from day to day.
 3 Declare his glory among the heathen,
 His wonders among all people.
 4 For ^bthe LORD *is* great, and ^cgreatly to be praised:
^aHe *is* to be feared above all gods.
 5 For ^eall the gods of the nations *are* idols:
^dBut the LORD made the heavens.
 6 Honour and majesty *are* before him:
 Strength and ^fbeauty *are* in his sanctuary.
 7 ^hGive unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people.
 Give unto the LORD glory and strength.

^a 1 Chr. 16.
 23—33.
 Ps. 33, 3.

^z Ps. 145, 3.
^c Ps. 18, 3.
^d Ps. 95, 3.
^e See Jer. 10.
 11, 12.
^f Ps. 115, 15.
 Isai. 42, 5.
^g Ps. 29, 2.
^h Ps. 29, 1, 2.

¹ Heb. *if they enter into my rest.*

"a people of wanderers in heart (are) they" (cp. cvii. 4).

And *they have not known my ways* [Or, "but they knew not My ways;" in allusion probably to the way in which the people were brought out of Egypt and led by the Angel (cp. Ex. xiii. 17, 18, xxiii. 20).

11. *That they should not enter into my rest*] Lit. "if they shall come &c.;" the common form of an oath in Hebrew. The "rest" here spoken of denotes the land of Canaan (see marg. ref.). Hence the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews infers that the true rest promised to the faithful, "God's rest" in the highest and fullest sense of the words, is yet future (Heb. iv. 9).

XCVI. This Psalm has been rightly designated a missionary hymn for all ages. Its liturgical character is decisively attested both by internal and external evidence; but, as it here stands, it is the production of a later period than that of David, to which the marg. ref. would assign it. For (1) the LXX. connect the Psalm with the building of the second Temple, intending, as it would seem, to denote its adaptation to that occasion. (2) The subject-matter and the phraseology point to a date later than that of David. (3) It is found in 1 Chr. xvi. in close connexion with portions of Pss. cv., cvii., and cviii., and the composite Psalm there recorded ends with the doxology, slightly varied, which closes the 4th book of the Psalter. Like Ps. xcv., this Psalm is predictive of "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. ix. 35); but its reference is to the coming of the Messiah as David's Lord, not as David's Son; as Jehovah, the Lord and King of the whole earth, not as the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isai. liii. 3).

VOL. III.

The concluding verses of the Psalm abound with allusions to the prophecies of Isaiah.

1. Cp. Isai. xlii. 10. The "new song" is not the Psalm itself, but the ascription of praise which shall ascend from a regenerated world at the Advent of Jehovah predicted in v. 13.

2. *Shew forth*] A word employed by Isaiah in a distinctive sense as denoting the proclamation of the Gospel (Isai. lii. 7, lx. 6). It answers to "evangelize" or proclaim the "Evangel" (Gospel).

3. *His wonders*] This word is frequently used with reference to the miracles wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness.

4. *greatly to be praised*] i.e. Worthy to be celebrated in festive songs.

5. The word rendered "idols" means "powerless things," or "vanities." It is used more frequently by Isaiah than by any other writer. The utter vanity and incapacity of the gods of the nations is contrasted with the might and majesty of the Creator (cp. 1 Cor. viii. 4).

6. The reference in the word rendered "sanctuary" is clearly to the earthly Sanctuary; and hence it seems probable that the Psalm was composed before the Captivity, the word rendered "strength" having special reference to the Ark, and the word rendered "before Him" having a similar reference to the Shechinah, or manifested glory of Jehovah in the most Holy Place; neither of which seems to have belonged to the second Temple.

7. *Give unto the LORD &c.*] i.e. "Ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength" in a song of praise. For the words cp. marg. ref. The sudden change in construction is highly poetical, and seems to imply that this and

- 8 Give unto the LORD the glory ¹*due unto his name*:
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.
- ^a Ps. 110. 3. 9 O worship the LORD ²*in the beauty of holiness*:
Fear before him, all the earth.
- ^a Ps. 93. 1. 10 Say among the heathen *that* ⁴*the LORD reigneth*:
& 97. 1. The world also shall be established that it shall not be
Rev. 11. 15. moved:
& 10. 6. ¹*He shall judge the people righteously.*
- ^a Ps. 67. 4. 11 ^mLet the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
& 98. 9. ⁿLet the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
- ^m Ps. 69. 34. 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* therein:
ⁿ Ps. 98. 7, 8. 13 Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for
he cometh,
For he cometh to judge the earth:
^o He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people
with his truth.
- ^o Ps. 67. 4.
Rev. 19. 11.

PSALM XCVII.

- ^a Ps. 96. 10. 1 THE ^aLORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
^b Isai. 60. 9. Let the ³multitude of ^bisles be glad *thereof*.
- ^c 1 Kin. 8. 12. 2 ^cClouds and darkness *are* round about him:
Ps. 18. 11. ¹ Heb. *of his name*. ² Or, *in the glorious sanctuary*. ³ Heb. *many, or, great isles*.

the following verses would be taken up by a different part of the choir.

8. *Bring an offering*] In allusion to the Eastern custom of bringing gifts when admitted into the presence of kings and rulers.

9. *the beauty of holiness*] See xxix. 2 note; cp. the wedding-garment in Matt. xxiii. 11. *fear*] Or, "tremble," as in xviii. 4.

10. The Psalmist is here again carried onward by the inspiring Spirit into the great day of the Lord, and calls upon the faithful to proclaim the personal Advent of Jehovah and His assumption of the kingdom.

it shall not be moved] Either by moral or physical causes of disturbance.

He shall judge the people righteously] *i.e.* He shall realize in His equitable administration of the world the types imperfectly afforded in the administration of Israel's most upright judges.

11. As the whole creation, both animate and inanimate, has groaned beneath the weight of the curse, so shall the whole creation partake of the great deliverance. Many of Isaiah's prophecies have reference to this subject (*e.g.* xxv. 1, xlii. 10, xlix. 13; cp. also Rom. viii. 21).

Let the sea roar] Cp. marg. ref.; v. 8 of which shows this expression to be one of joy and exultation.

12. Cp. Isai. xlv. 23, lv. 12.

XCVII. The subject is the same as in the preceding Psalm, viz. the personal Advent of Jehovah, which is represented in the language of the Pentateuch and of those earlier Psalms which describe the

Theophany on the occasion of the giving of the Law.

Its immediate occasion was probably some great national deliverance, which it was the object of the writer to commemorate in this and the other liturgical anthems which precede and follow it.

Whether the quotation in Heb. i. 6 be from this Psalm or not, and whether the reference of the writer be to the first, or to the second, introduction into the world of the First-begotten (see v. 7 note), the Psalm itself contains conclusive evidence that it reaches forward not only to the first Advent of Christ, but also from thence to "the consummation of all things."

The Psalm naturally divides itself into four strophes, each consisting of three verses. The connecting links with Ps. xcvi. are numerous.

1. *let the earth rejoice*] Including *i.e.* both the animate and inanimate creation (cp. Isai. xlii. 10-12).

Let the multitude of isles be glad] Lit. "many (in the sense of "all") isles rejoice." The Hebrew writers appear to have used the word rendered "islands" to denote all those countries which were separated from themselves by the sea; and the "inhabitants of the isles" became synonymous with the Gentile world (cp. Isai. xlii. 4 with Matt. xii. 21).

2. *Clouds and darkness*] The same words, as also "fire" (v. 3), are found in Dent. iv. 11, and v. 22, with reference to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. "Clouds and darkness do not belong to the Divine nature, but are characteristic of the Divine dis-

^dRighteousness and judgment are the ¹habitation of his throne.

3 ^eA fire goeth before him,
And burneth up his enemies round about.

4 ^fHis lightnings enlightened the world:
The earth saw, and trembled.

5 ^gThe hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6 ^hThe heavens declare his righteousness,
And all the people see his glory.

7 ⁱConfounded¹ be all they that serve graven images,
That boast themselves of idols:—^kworship him, all *ye* gods.

8 Zion heard, and was glad;
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced
Because of thy judgments, O LORD.

9 For thou, LORD, art ^lhigh above all the earth:
^mThou art exalted far above all gods.

¹ Or, *establishment*.

^d Ps. 89. 14.

^e Ps. 18. 8.

Dan. 7. 10.

Hab. 3. 5.

^f Ex. 19. 18.

Ps. 104. 32.

^g Judg. 5. 5.

Nah. 1. 5.

^h Ps. 19. 1.

ⁱ Ex. 20. 4.

Lev. 26. 1.

Deut. 5. 8.

& 27. 15.

^k Heb. 1. 6.

^l Ps. 83. 18.

^m Ex. 18. 11.

Ps. 95. 3.

“pensions” (cp. 1 John i. 5 with lxxvii. 19).

[*the habitation*] Rather, “the foundation of His throne,” *i.e.* on which His throne rests.

3. *A fire*] Rather, “Fire,” by which God is represented, or “lightning” (cp. Ex. ix. 23; Matt. xxiv. 27). A similar expression occurs in l. 3^d, and the same order of events is marked in both Psalms (cp. vv. 3, 8 of this Psalm with l. 3, 5). Our Lord confirms both the general truth of the prediction, and also the order of the events foretold in both Psalms (Matt. xiii. 30).

4. *His lightnings enlightened &c.*] Cp. lxxvii. 18. Our Lord confirms this prediction also in the description of His own Advent (Luke xvii. 24).

5. *The hills melted &c.*] Cp. Mic. i. 4. The frequent allusions in this series of Psalms to the convulsions of the earth &c. suggest the idea that some great earthquake, like that in the days of king Uzziah, was fresh in the memory of the writer (cp. Amos i. 1). Other passages in the writings of the Prophets connect the levelling of the mountains with the personal Advent of the Lord (*e.g.* Isai. xl. 4, 5, and Zech. xiv. 4, 5, where express reference is made to that great earthquake).

At the presence of the LORD &c.] Rather, “by reason of the Presence of Jehovah, of the Presence of the Lord of the whole earth,” *i.e.* of the earth now completely reduced into obedience to His sceptre. The double appellation probably denotes the Advent of the Lord in His twofold aspect—both as the Judge and also as the Avenger—to judge and to take vengeance on His enemies, to judge and to avenge the cause of His people. This appears to be one of the few passages in the Old Testament in which the predictions of the Advent of the promised Messiah and of Jehovah Himself converge to one point.

6. *The heavens declare his righteousness*] Cp. l. 6. The words may refer to some supernatural attestation of the sovereignty of the Judge.

[*all the people see his glory*] Rather, “all the peoples,” or “nations.” These words are the echo of many passages in the prophecies of Isaiah, in which the universal manifestation of the glory of the Lord at His second Advent is foretold in almost identical terms (*e.g.* Isai. xl. 5, lxvi. 18).

7. Rather, “Ashamed are all they, the worshippers of images, who boast themselves of idols (or idol-gods).” The verbal resemblance to Isai. xlii. 17, and xlv. 9, should be observed. Cp. Jer. x. 14; Rev. vi. 12-17. [*worship him, all ye gods*] The LXX. and other Versions understand the passage of the Angels. Both usage (see viii. 5 note) and context, however, seem opposed to this interpretation. From the context, it seems clear that the allusion here (as in v. 9, xcv. 3, xcvi. 5) is primarily to those cosmical powers which had been deified not only in the Gentile world, but also by many of the Jews, who, at all periods of their history before the Captivity, were prone to lapse into idolatry. Inasmuch, however, as Angels may have become the objects of idolatrous worship in the days of the Psalmist, there seems to be no sufficient reason for excluding a reference to them in this place, in support of which the marg. reference may be urged; a passage which is referred by many not to the Incarnation, but to the second Advent.

8. *Zion heard, and was glad*] Cp. lxviii.

11. The words describe in glowing terms the joy of the Church at the coming of her Lord (see Luke xxi. 28).

9. *high above all the earth*] Cp. marg. ref. It should be remarked that the Hebrew word translated “high,” and the word translated “exalted,” are cognate in their etymology.

- * Ps. 34. 14. 10 Ye that love the LORD, ^ahate evil:
 & 37. 27. "He preserveth the souls of his saints;
 & 101. 3. "He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
 Amos 5. 15. 11 "Light is sown for the righteous,
 Rom. 12. 9. And gladness for the upright in heart.
 * Ps. 31. 23. 12 "Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous;
 Prov. 2. 8. "And give thanks ¹at the remembrance of his holiness.
 * Ps. 37. 39.
 Dan. 3. 28.
 & 6. 22. 27.
 * Job 22. 28.
 Ps. 112. 4.

PSALM XCVIII.

A Psalm.

- 1 O "SING unto the LORD a new song;
 For ^bhe hath done marvellous things:
 "His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.
 2 "The LORD hath made known his salvation:
 "His righteousness hath he ²openly shewed in the sight of the
 heathen.
 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house
 of Israel:
 "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
 4 "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth:
 Make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
 5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp;
 With the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
 6 "With trumpets and sound of cornet
- ¹ Or, to the memorial.
² Or, revealed.

10. The promised deliverance of Jehovah is a reason for the hatred and avoidance of evil.

He preserveth &c.] Some prefer, "He Who preserveth the souls of His saints will deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

11. *Light is sown for the righteous*] A beautiful and expressive figure. The light, now sown for the righteous, shall spring up in that day, when unto those that fear His name, "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2).

XCVIII. This is the only Psalm of the series (xciii.-xcix) which bears any inscription in the Hebrew, and it is the only Psalm throughout the Psalter which bears as its inscription the single word "Mizmor," *i.e.* Psalm. The primary meaning of the verb from which *mizmor* is derived is to cut or prune. The clearly marked division of this Psalm into three strophes, each consisting of three verses, which was probably indicated in its liturgical use by means of the instrumental accompaniments, confirms the probability of the accuracy of this definition. The beginning and the end of the Psalm are taken from the xcviith; and the resemblance throughout is so striking that there can be little doubt of the identity of authorship. The Psalm abounds, even more than the other Psalms of the series, with expressions borrowed from earlier Psalms, and from the prophecies of Isaiah, especially the later prophecies. Its composite character points to its comparatively late date.

The subject of this Psalm, as of most of the other Psalms of this series, is the final demonstration to the world of the salvation wrought out for the people of God, and the universal acknowledgment by its inhabitants of His righteousness, His faithfulness, and His majesty.

1. See xcvi. 1, 3 notes.

hath gotten him the victory] Rather, "hath wrought deliverance, or salvation, for Him."

3. *All the ends &c.*] These words occur verbatim in Isai. lii. 10; cp. Isai. xlix. 6. In Rom. xi. 12, 25, 26 the salvation of Israel is also connected with the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles.

4. *Make a loud noise*] Or, "break forth into a loud shout." The verb thus rendered is used in this signification only in this place and in the earlier and later prophecies of Isaiah, where it occurs six times, and in each place in conjunction with some form of the word rendered "rejoice." It probably denotes sounds made with the mouth, as distinguished from instrumental music.

sing praise] Rather, "play," *i.e.* accompany the song with the music of instruments (vv. 5, 6).

6. *trumpets*] This is the only place in the Book of Psalms in which the Hebrew word so rendered occurs. In the later periods of Jewish history the straight trumpet, as well as the curved cornet, was used on extraordinary occasions, not only by the priests,

Make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

- 7 ^kLet the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.

^k Ps. 96. 11.

- 8 Let the floods ^lclap *their* hands:

^l Isai. 55. 12.

- 9 Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD; ^mfor he cometh
to judge the earth:

^m Ps. 96. 10,
13.

With righteousness shall he judge the world,
And the people with equity.

PSALM XCIX.

- 1 THE ^aLORD reigneth; let the people tremble:

^a Ps. 83. 1.

^bHe sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth ^lbe moved.

- 2 The LORD *is* great in Zion;

^b Ex. 25. 22.

And he *is* ^chigh above all the people.

Ps. 18. 10.

- 3 Let them praise ^dthy great and terrible name;—*for it is holy.*

& 80. 1.

^c Ps. 97. 9.

^d Deut. 28. 58.

Rev. 15. 4.

^l Heb. *stagger.*

but also by the Levites (1 Chr. xvi. 42), and even by the people generally (2 K. xi. 14). At the same time, the distinctive use of the trumpets by the priests (see Num. x. 8 note) seems to have been partially retained (cp. 2 Chr. xiii. 14; Ezra iii. 10; Neh. xii. 41). Their use on occasion of the proclamation or coronation of kings, taken in conjunction with the words here "before Jehovah the King," confirms the view that the reference is to that signal assumption of the kingdom by the Redeemer at His second Advent, which is the subject of so large a portion of ancient prophecy.

Make a joyful noise] The same word as "make a loud noise" in v. 4.

7. See marg. ref. note, and xxiv. 1. The word rendered "world" here and in v. 9 occurs eight times in the other books of the Psalter, seven times in this fourth book, and nine times in the earlier prophecies of Isaiah.

8. *Let the floods clap their hands*] For the metaphor see marg. ref. Some find in this phrase an allusion to the closing of the waters of the Red Sea ^c the Egyptians.

XCIX. This is the last of that series of royal Psalms (regarding Ps. c. as the Doxology which closes the strain) which announce the fact, and describe the results, of the Advent of Jehovah: it is also the third of the Psalms (cp. xciii. xcvi) which begin with the watchword "Jehovah is King." Its connexion retrospectively with Isaiah's vision (ch. vi.), and prospectively with Rev. xi., xiv.-xvi., should not be overlooked. The Psalm may be described as the actual realization of that state of blessedness which was foretold in the Seraphic song heard by the Prophet, but which awaits the great day of the Advent, in order to its actual inauguration; a state in which sin and the curse shall be unknown, and the earth itself shall be full of the glory of Jehovah, as its universally acknowledged Lord and King (cp. John xii. 41). This glory of the New Jerusalem and of the Tabernacle of God

amongst men is portrayed in imagery borrowed from the ritual of the Jewish Temple, and from the recorded dealings of God with Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. These (cp. Rev. v. 8-10) may be regarded as the representatives of the Old Testament Church, or of the converted Jews as a nation, or of the general assembly and Church of the first-born.

The two chief divisions of the Psalm are clearly marked by the refrain of vv. 5 and 9. The remarkable correspondence of Rev. xi. 15-18 with this Psalm in particular, serves as a key to the interpretation of several portions which would otherwise be involved in much obscurity.

1. *let the people tremble*] Rather, "the peoples, or nations, tremble, or are angry" (cp. Rev. xi. 18).

He sitteth between the cherubims] Rather, "(even) He Who sitteth upon the Cherubim." These words either define the manner in which Jehovah reigns, "He reigns, sitting upon the Cherubim;" or, as seems more probable, they imply that He Who, in the days of the writer, "dwelt between the Cherubim," enthroned, as it were, upon those mysterious forms, and resting His feet upon the Ark beneath them (v. 5), is beheld in prophetic vision as "reigning in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously." Cp. vv. 2 and 5 with Isai. xxiv. 23.

let the earth be moved] Rather, "the earth is moved, or quakes;" with probably an allusion to the earthquake in the days of Uzziah. Cp. Isai. xxiv. 19, 20; Rev. xi. 19.

2. *The LORD is great in Zion*] The reference seems to be to some signal exhibition of Divine power and favour, in and on behalf of Zion, which shall excite the admiration of all nations.

3. *Let them praise*] Rather, "They praise." The epithets "great and terrible" are applied in Deut. x. 17 to Jehovah Himself.

for it is holy] Rather, "Holy is He" (cp.

- * Job 36. 5,
 6, 7.
 † ver. 9.
 † 1 Chr. 28. 2.
 Ps. 132. 7.
 † Lev. 19. 2.
 † Jer. 15. 1.
 † Ex. 14. 15.
 & 15. 25.
 1 Sam. 7. 9.
 & 12. 18.
 † Ex. 33. 9.
 * Num. 14.
 20.
 Jer. 46. 28.
 Zeph. 3. 7.
 * See Ex. 32.
 2, &c.
 Num. 20. 12,
 24.
 Deut. 9. 20.
 * ver. 5.
 Ex. 15. 2.
 Ps. 34. 3.
 & 118. 28.
 * Ps. 145,
 title.
 * Ps. 95. 1.
- 4 'The king's strength also loveth judgment;
 Thou dost establish equity,
 Thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
 5 'Exalt ye the LORD our God,—and worship at ²his footstool;
 For ^{1a}he is holy.
 6 'Moses and Aaron among his priests,
 And Samuel among them that call upon his name;
 They ^kcalled upon the LORD, and he answered them.
 7 'He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar:
 They kept his testimonies, and the ordinance *that* he gave them.
 8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God:
 "Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
 Though ^athou tookest vengeance of their inventions.
 9 'Exalt the LORD our God,—and worship at his holy hill;
 For the LORD our God *is* holy.

PSALM C.

* A Psalm of ²praise.1 MAKE ^aa joyful noise unto the LORD, ³all ye lands.¹ Or, *it is holy*.² Or, *thanksgiving*.³ Heb. *all the earth*.

vv. 5, 9, and Isai. vi. 3). The words are probably a response of other voices.

4. The original construction is difficult. The words may be rendered: "And the strength (or might) of a king who loveth judgment (cp. xi. 7; Isai. lxi. 8), Thou (even Thou) hast established; equity, judgment, and righteousness, Thou (even Thou) hast executed." Though the ultimate reference seems to be to the King Jehovah (cp. Isai. xxxiii. 5), it is reasonable to suppose that the immediate allusion is to the reign of the Jewish king, such as Hezekiah, or Josiah. The words, "executed judgment and justice," are used as characteristic of the reigns of David and Solomon (cp. 2 Sam. viii. 15; 1 K. x. 9; 1 Chr. xviii. 14).

5. *at his footstool*] The word so translated seems to be employed to denote the Ark (cp. marg. ref.; Lam. ii. 1; Rev. xi. 19). Allusion, however, may be made to the great Day of Atonement, when the High Priest, as the representative of the whole nation, carried the confessions and worship of the people with the blood of the sacrifices to the Ark and its Mercy-seat.

For he is holy] Rather, "Holy is He," as in v. 3. The "for" is not in the Hebrew.

6. *They called &c.*] Lit. "calling upon Jehovah, and He answers them." The substitution in the A.V. of the past tense for the present conveys to the mind an entirely different idea from that which may have been in the mind of the Psalmist. These verses may contain either a description of the present worship of the redeemed Church, of which Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are the chosen representatives; or a predictive representation of the combined worship of the risen saints, and of those who shall be Christ's at His coming, in that great day

of His appearing which the Psalm describes. In the latter case the saints will all have become kings and priests unto God (Rev. v. 10); and Moses, Aaron, and Samuel may be considered as representing the Church in its priestly character: in the case of Moses and Aaron, the priestly functions being peculiarly distinctive; in the case of Samuel, the character of a man mighty in prayer. Cp. Rev. xi. 16-18.

7. *Lit. In a pillar of cloud He speaks unto them.* The Old Testament imagery is still preserved, as denoting the near access of the saints to God, and their admission into the same intimate communion with Him into which Moses was admitted of old (cp. Ezek. xxx. 3). The cloud under the New, as under the Old, Testament Dispensation is still the outward and visible sign and symbol of the Divine Presence, as on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke ix. 34, 35) and of Ascension (Acts i. 9). It will be so also at the second Advent (Acts i. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Rev. i. 7, xiv. 14).

They kept his testimonies &c.] The tense is changed, and the reference is clearly to the past (as in Rev. vii. 14, 15).

8. Rather, "Thou wast a forgiving God to them, and yet taking vengeance upon their inventions (or doings)." God punished Moses and Aaron with exclusion from the land of promise, though He pardoned their sins. The reference may also be generally to the sins of the people.

C. The inscription describes the purpose of the Psalm, which was not improbably written for a festive procession to the Temple (see v. 4, and cxviii. 19). It nearly resembles the early part of Ps. xcvi., and is closely connected with the preceding series of Psalms, of which it forms the fitting conclusion. The words "For the Lord is

2 Serve the LORD with gladness :

Come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God :

^b *It is he that hath made us, ¹ and not we ourselves ;*

^c *We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

4 ^d Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise :

Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good ; ^e his mercy is everlasting ;

And his truth endureth ² to all generations.

¹ Or, and his we are.

² Heb. to generation and generation, Ps. 89. 1.

^b Ps. 119. 73.

& 139. 13.

& 149. 2.

Eph. 2. 10.

^c Ps. 95. 7.

Ezek. 34. 30,

31.

^d Ps. 66. 13.

& 116. 17, 18,

19.

^e Ps. 136. 1.

good "&c., v. 5, frequently occurs in the later Psalms, and would seem to have been used commonly as the burden of Psalms of praise about and after the Captivity. They also occur (2 Chr. v. 13) in the hymn sung at the Dedication of the Temple.

It would be straining the import of the Psalm to call it Messianic ; but it may be considered in a real sense prophetic. It foretells the future universal reign of Jehovah : it instructs all peoples, that they have an interest in Jehovah's sovereignty, and in His choice for His own of a peculiar people.

1. *Make a joyful noise &c.* See xcvi. 4. The address is to the whole earth (see the marg.), all people, and all living things. In v. 4, a smaller audience is perhaps addressed ; the worshippers present at the ceremony of the day may be called upon to enter the Courts of Jehovah with thoughts suitable to His service, and to praise Him for His doings to all and to themselves.

2. *come before his presence*] These words presuppose the existence, if they do not necessarily presuppose the manifestation, of the Divine glory between the Cherubim

which overshadowed the Mercy-seat. This, perhaps, affords a clue to the time of composition of this series of Psalms, and restricts it to the period preceding the Captivity.

3. *i.e.* "Know ye, all people, by infallible proofs, which He has exhibited to us, that He is God (Elohim) alone. It is He that made, that is, chose us out of all peoples and made us His own" (marg. *reff.*).

The expression "not we (who made) ourselves" seems harsh ; the marginal reading is better, and is supported by the analogy of Isai. xliii. 1. If the received text be retained, the verse should perhaps be rendered, "It is He that made us ; and we were not."

5. If the Psalmist in v. 4 addressed a peculiar audience, in this verse he returns to the far larger audience of v. 1, *i.e.* to all living things, to whom the promise was first made.

This Psalm contains a promise of Christianity, as winter at its close contains the promise of spring.

ADDITIONAL NOTE UPON PSALMS XCI.—C.

FREQUENT reference has been made in the notes on Pss. xci.—c., and more particularly in the notes on Pss. xciii., xcvi., and xcvi., to their mutual connexion, and their common dependence upon the prophecies, especially the *later* prophecies, of Isaiah. The indications of mutual connexion and common authorship, with regard at least to several of these Psalms, are traced mainly in the identity or similarity of the subject-matter, in their adaptation for liturgical use, in the frequent recurrence of the same or similar words and phrases, in the general resemblance of style, in the characteristic use of iteration &c. The coincidences of subject, style, and phraseology between these Psalms and the prophecies, both earlier and later, of Isaiah suffice to shew that if the Psalms and the prophecies were not the compositions of the same writer, the Psalmist must have borrowed from the Prophet, or the Prophet from the Psalmist.

The coincidences of Ps. xcvi. (to specify one Psalm), with the prophecies of Isaiah will be presented to the eye of the English reader most conveniently in the following form ; the translations being given direct from the original and not in the words of the A.V. :—

Psalm xcvi

compared with

the prophecies of Isaiah.

"O sing unto the Lord a new song," v. 1.*"O sing unto the Lord a new song."* xlii. 10.*"His right-hand and His holy arm hath wrought deliverance for Him."* v. 2.

"His arm wrought deliverance for Him." lix. 16.
"Mine arm hath wrought deliverance for Me." lxiii. 5.
"Jehovah hath made bare His holy arm." lii. 10.

"He hath remembered His lovingkindness and His truth toward the house of Israel." v. 3.

"I will make mention of (or remember) the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah . . . and the great goodness toward the house of Israel . . . according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses." lxiii. 7.

"All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God," v. 3.*"All the ends of the earth shall see (or have seen) the salvation of our God."* lii. 10*"Shout aloud unto Jehovah, all the earth; break forth and sing joyously; yea, sing praise."* v. 4.*"Sing joyously, O heavens, for Jehovah hath done it; shout aloud, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth, O ye mountains, into a joyous song."* xlv. 23.*"And the voice of a psalm."* v. 5.*"And the voice of a psalm."* li. 3.

Coincidences of phraseology between other Psalms of this series and the prophecies of Isaiah, combine in establishing either the identity of authorship, or the dependence of the Psalmist upon the Prophet, or of the Prophet upon the Psalmist.

It is now desirable to collect the principal internal indications which these Psalms afford of the date of their composition. It is generally agreed amongst modern critics that the principal epochs of Hebrew poetry were (1) the time of David; (2) that of Hezekiah; and (3) the period of, or shortly subsequent to, the Captivity (cp. p. 93). The following reasons seem to determine the balance of evidence to be in favour of the composition of this series of Psalms at, or about, the second of these periods, *i.e.* during the time of the Prophet Isaiah:

(1) Allusions to the Captivity and the restoration found in the Psalms of later date, and the use of words and forms characteristic of the earliest and the latest books of the Hebrew Scriptures, are wanting; but there are allusions to the Ark and probably to the monarchy, which find their natural explanation in the supposition that these Psalms were composed whilst the Temple of Solomon still stood, and whilst the royal house of David still sat upon the throne.

(2) The state of Judæa with regard to the prospect of foreign invasion, as described in these Psalms, corresponds closely with that of the reign of Ahaz and the first fourteen years of that of Hezekiah (cp. xciii. 3 with Isai. viii. 7).

(3) The internal disorganization of Judæa described in xciv. 5, 6, 16, 20, 21, corresponds very closely with that described in 2 Chr. xxix. 8, 9, and in Isai. i. iii. 12, 15, ix. 13; x. 1, 2.

(4) The subject-matter of these Psalms, *viz.*, the establishment of Jehovah's throne in righteousness, the confusion of idolaters, and the universal proclamation of "the gospel of the kingdom," is identical with the subject-matter of some of the con-

fessedly genuine prophecies of Isaiah, as well as with that of those prophecies which are contained in chapters xl.-lxvi, the genuineness of which has been the subject of dispute in modern times. The probable date, therefore, of these Psalms is the time of the Prophet Isaiah; a probability confirmed by a comparison of the jubilant strain of these Psalms and of the contemporaneous (as it is thought) prophecies of Isaiah, descriptive of the second Advent, with the darker and more minatory character of the greater portion of those prophecies, relating to the same event, which were delivered subsequently to the Babylonian Captivity. Cp. *e.g.* Zech. xii. 10-14, xiv. *passim*; Malachi iii. 2, 3, iv. 5, 6, with Isai. xii. *passim*, xxv. 9, xxvi. 19.

(5) The repeated allusions to convulsions of the earth throughout this series of Psalms find their most natural historical groundwork in the great earthquake in the days of king Uzziah (cp. Amos i. 1).

(6) The indications found in these Psalms of the restoration of the Temple-service exactly harmonize with the great revival of national religious worship in the days of king Hezekiah (2 Chr. xxix. 25-28).

Direct proof of the identity of authorship being absent, there are internal indications (both inferential and positive) of originality which lead to the conclusion that if Isaiah were not the writer of these Psalms, the priority of authorship must have been on the part of the Prophet rather than on that of the Psalmist.

In addition to the *a priori* improbability that the greatest of the Hebrew Prophets should have been indebted to the contemporaneous, or nearly contemporaneous, writer of a few short lyrical poems, both for portions of the subject-matter of his great theme, and also for some of the most distinctive characteristics of his style and phraseology, there appears to be internal evidence, if adoption, or imitation, on either side be admitted, that the prophecies were anterior to the Psalms.

The general conclusion may, therefore, be thus stated :

(1) There seems good reason for assigning a common authorship to most, if not all, of Pss. xci-c (more particularly to Pss. xciii. and xcv-c), and possibly to these Psalms and to the prophecies of Isaiah.

(2) The Psalmist, if not identical with the Prophet Isaiah, seems to have been largely indebted both to the earlier and later prophecies of Isaiah for his subject-matter, for the characteristics of his style, and for his phraseology.

(3) The date of the composition of these Psalms seems to be approximately assigned, with the greatest amount of probability, to the times of Hezekiah, whose accession to the throne may have formed the historical groundwork of this remarkable revival of the regal prophecies, both in the writings of Isaiah and in this series of Psalms. In any case there appear to be strong grounds for assigning to this series of Psalms an earlier date than that of the Captivity.

PSALM CI.

A Psalm of David.

1 ^a I WILL sing of mercy and judgment :

Unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

2 I will ^b behave myself wisely in a perfect way.

O when wilt thou come unto me ?

I will ^c walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set no ^d wicked thing before mine eyes :

^e I hate the work of them ^f that turn aside ;

It shall not cleave to me.

4 A froward heart shall depart from me :

I will not ^g know a wicked person.

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off :

^h Him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

6 Mine eyes *shall* be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me :

^a Ps. 89. 1.

^b 1 Sam. 18. 14.

^c 1 Kin. 9. 4. & 11. 4.

^d Ps. 97. 10. ^e Josh. 23. 6. ^f 1 Sam. 12. 20, 21.

^g Ps. 40. 4. & 125. 5. ^h Matt. 7. 23.

ⁱ 2 Tim. 2. 19. ^j Ps. 18. 27. Prov. 6. 17.

¹ Heb. *thing of Belial*.

CI. This Psalm throughout breathes the earnest, sincere, truth-loving, lofty spirit of David. It may have been written when he commenced his reign over the twelve tribes and first occupied the city of David (2 Sam. v. 7-9). It is one of the very few (see Pss. cxxvii., cxxviii.) in which the duties of daily life are described, and their due performance referred to Jehovah. There appears to be frequent allusion to this Psalm in the Book of Proverbs (xi. 20, xxi. 4) : the tone of it and of Proverbs, in fact, is not dissimilar. In Ps. xv., David states the conditions of acceptance with Jehovah ; in this Psalm, his purpose, to enforce the same as king.

1. "My theme," says the king, "is mercy and justice ; addressed to Jehovah Whose Spirit inspires, and of Whom alone is

strength to sing and to do." The attributes are God's, but they may be imitated at a distance by man (Micah vi. 8 ; Matt. xxiii. 23), and are the foundation of practical virtue.

sing] Or, "play upon the harp" or "instrument of music."

2. David, while he declares his purpose of living wisely in a perfect way, recollects many a sin and many a failure ; so asks, or rather wishes, for Jehovah's promised aid (cp. Ex. xx. 24).

3, 4. *wicked thing*] See marg. xli. 8 note. David, in dealing with such men as Doeg, Cush, &c., had had large experience of slanderers, talebearers, and overweening flatterers, the pest of kings. Hence his determination expressed here.

He that walketh ¹in a perfect way, he shall serve me.
 7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house:
 He that telleth lies ²shall not tarry in my sight.
 8 I will ³early destroy all the wicked of the land;
 That I may cut off all wicked doers ⁴from the city of the LORD.

^a Ps. 75. 10.
 Jer. 21. 12.
^b Ps. 43. 2, 8.

PSALM CII.

^a Ps. 61. 2.
 & 142. 2, 3.

A Prayer ³of the afflicted, ⁴when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

- 1 HEAR my prayer, O LORD,
 And let my cry ^acome unto thee.
 2 ^bHide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble;
^cIncline thine ear unto me:
 In the day *when* I call answer me speedily.
 3 ^dFor my days are consumed ^elike smoke,
 And ^fmy bones are burned as an hearth.
 4 My heart is smitten, and ^gwithered like grass;
 So that I forget to eat my bread.
 5 By reason of the voice of my groaning
^hMy bones cleave to my ⁱskin.
 6 ^jI am like ^ka pelican of the wilderness:
 I am like an owl of the desert.
 7 I ^lwatch, and am as a sparrow
^mAlone upon the house top.
 8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day;
 And they that are ⁿmad against me are ^osworn against me.
 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,

^a Ex. 2. 23.
 1 Sam. 9. 16.
 Ps. 18. 6.
^b Ps. 27. 9.
 & 69. 17.
^c Ps. 71. 2.
 & 88. 2.
^d Ps. 118. 83.
 Jam. 4. 14.
^e Job 30. 30.
 Ps. 31. 10.
 Lam. 1. 13.
^f Ps. 37. 2.
 ver. 11.
^g Job 19. 20.
 Lam. 4. 8.
^h Job 30. 29.
ⁱ Isai. 34. 11.
 Zeph. 2. 14.
^j Ps. 77. 4.
^k Ps. 38. 11.

^m Acts 26. 11.
ⁿ Acts 23. 12.

¹ Or, *perfect in the way*,
 Ps. 119. 1.

² Heb. *shall not be established*.
³ Or, *for*.

⁴ Or, (as some read) *into smoke*.
⁵ Or, *flesh*.

8. *early &c.*] *i.e.* "Day after day, each morning" (see 2 Sam. xxiv. 11; Luke xxii. 60), without let or hindrance, I will pursue my endeavour; the clearance of my palace is only the beginning of my enterprise; I will drive out at last all evildoers from the land, but specially from the city in which Jehovah dwells."

CII. The inscription of this Psalm is peculiar: it appears to be a direction for the use of the Psalm by all persons afflicted. The Psalm itself (see *vv.* 14-18) was probably written during the Captivity: possibly when it had lasted long, and when the time prefigured in prophecy was almost expiring. The word rendered *set time* in *v.* 13 seems used (*lxxv.* 2 marg.; Hab. ii. 3; Dan. viii. 19) for the appointed time, *i.e.* of return. The intensity of passionate sorrow betrays the individual sufferer. But his sorrow is not only on account of his own ruined hopes: it is also on account of the ruin of his nation; raised up once by God to the highest eminence, and cast down now for sin to the lowest abyss. The latter ingredient of the bitter cup of sorrow in many parts of the Psalm, overcomes the individual sentiment (*vv.* 13, 14, 16, 28).

3. *consumed like smoke*] Or, as in the marg., *i.e.* melt away, are mingled (so to

say) with smoke, and disappear with it into nothing.

The Psalmist's bones, the support and solid foundation of his body (Prov. xvii. 22), are burnt up as an hearth (upon which fire is ever smouldering), or as a firebrand consuming in the flame.

4, 5. His heart is sun-smitten (*cxxi.* 6; Hos. ix. 16) and withers; he forgets to eat bread (Job xxxiii. 20; 1 Sam. i. 7); his body, through sorrow and loud complaining, is nought but skin and bone (*marg. ref.*).

6, 7. He is like a pelican alone in the wilderness; like an owl hooting alone in desolate ruins; like a sparrow that mourns without its partner upon the housetop.

The Hebrew word here translated "pelican" is rendered "cormorant" in the A.V. of *marg. ref.* It is a bird that lives in swamps.

8. *are sworn against me*] Some render, "swear by me," or use my name as a curse, saying, "Let him be as he is, whom Jehovah hath cast down." Isai. lxxv. 15; Jer. xxix. 22, xlii. 18.

9. To sit among the ashes, or to strew the head and dress with ashes, are well-known expressions of the deepest affliction (Job ii. 8). To eat ashes instead of bread, whilst grovelling in the dust, would seem a still

- And °mingled my drink with weeping,
 10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath :
 For °thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
 11 °My days are like a shadow that declineth ;
 And °I am withered like grass.
 12 But °thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever ;
 And °thy remembrance unto all generations.
 13 Thou shalt arise, and °have mercy upon Zion :
 For the time to favour her, yea, the °set time, is come.
 14 For thy servants take pleasure in °her stones,
 And favour the dust thereof.
 15 So the heathen shall °fear the name of the LORD,
 And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
 16 When the LORD shall build up Zion,
 °He shall appear in his glory.
 17 °He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
 And not despise their prayer.
 18 This shall be °written for the generation to come :
 And °the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.
 19 For he hath °looked down from the height of his sanctuary ;
 From heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;
 20 °To hear the groaning of the prisoner ;
 To loose °those that are appointed to death ;
 21 To °declare the name of the LORD in Zion,
 And his praise in Jerusalem ;
 22 When the people are gathered together,
 And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.
 23 He °weakened my strength in the way ;
 He °shortened my days.

¹ Heb. *the children of death*.

² Heb. *afflicted*.

more forcible expression of hopeless sorrow (Lam. iii. 16).

And mingled &c.] See marg. reff. "Tears," in those reff., are the meat and bread of the Psalmist; here they are mingled with his drink.

10. The bitterest ingredient of our cup of sorrow is, to know that it is owing to Jehovah's wrath and fierce anger for sin.

cast me down] Rather, "cast me away." The metaphor is probably from a wind (Job xxvii. 21), which lifts up and casts away. It describes the condition of God's people, plucked by His hand out of the home of promise, and cast far away into exile: where their days (see xc. 9) decline and vanish away as a shadow that lengthens (Jer. vi. 4) and disappears in the gloom (cix. 23): or as a plant plucked up by the roots, dried up instantly, and destroyed.

12-14. The import is, "But Thou, O Lord, dost endure," or rather, "dost sit upon Thy throne and reign for ever; and Thy name (or memorial, a surety of mercy and faithfulness), and Thy promise are for evermore. The time (see Jer. xxv. 11, 12. xxix. 10; Dan. ix. 2) has come that Thou shouldst show mercy, and it is needed. Thy servants love, far above the palaces in

the midst of which they dwell, the city wasted and ruinous in which God dwelt: they shed bitter tears of sorrow when they think of her in the dust." (See Neh. iv. 2; Lam. iv. 1.)

favour the dust thereof &c.] The Prayer-Book Version has "it pitieth them to see her in the dust."

15. By His restoration of Zion, Jehovah will extend His kingdom: and all peoples and kings will recognize His name, and worship Him with fear and trembling.

Note the persuasions addressed by this Psalmist to Jehovah listening to, and heeding him, a man!—the deep need of His interference (rr. 13, 14), the furtherance of His kingdom (rr. 15), and of His name and fame (rr. 18, 21), as a God of deliverances. The literal rendering of the Hebrew in rr. 16-18 &c. describes the vision as accomplished; and adds circumstances (rr. 21, 22) which at the time of the utterance of the word must have seemed incredible and impossible; but soon were in fact realized.

Cp. with rr. 19-21, Isai. xlii. 7, lxi. 1, lxiii. 15. For other resemblances between this Psalm and the latter chapters of Isaiah, see marg. reff.

23. in the way] i.e. "In my journey of

° Ps. 42. 3.
 & 90. 5.

° Ps. 30. 7.

° Job 14. 2.

Ps. 109. 23.

Eccles. 6. 12.

° ver. 4.

Isai. 40. 6.

Jam. 1. 10.

° ver. 26.

Ps. 9. 7.

Lam. 5. 19.

° Ps. 135. 13.

° Isai. 60. 10.

Zech. 1. 12.

— Isai. 60. 2.

° Ps. 79. 1.

° 1 Kin. 8. 43.

Ps. 138. 4.

Isai. 60. 3.

° Isai. 60. 1.2.

° Neh. 1. 6, 11.

& 2. 8.

° Rom. 15. 4.

1 Cor. 10. 11.

° Ps. 22. 31.

Isai. 43. 21.

° Deut. 26. 15.

Ps. 14. 2.

& 33. 13, 14.

° Ps. 79. 11.

° Ps. 22. 22.

° Job 21. 21.

- ¹ Isai. 38. 10. 24 ¹I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days :
² Thy years *are* throughout all generations.
³ Ps. 90. 2. 25 ¹Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth :
⁴ Hab. 1. 12. And the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.
⁵ Gen. 1. 1. 26 ¹They shall perish, but ²thou shalt ¹endure :
⁶ Isai. 34. 4. Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;
⁷ & 51. 6. As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed :
⁸ & 65. 17. 27 But ³thou *art* the same,
⁹ & 66. 22. And thy years shall have no end.
¹⁰ Rom. 8. 20. 28 ¹The children of thy servants shall continue,
¹¹ 2 Pet. 3. 7. And their seed shall be established before thee.
¹² ver. 12.
¹³ Mal. 3. 6.
¹⁴ Heb. 13. 8.
¹⁵ Jam. 1. 17.
¹⁶ Ps. 69. 36.

PSALM CIII.

A Psalm of David.

- ¹ BLESS ¹the LORD, O my soul :
 And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.
² Bless the LORD, O my soul,—and forget not all his benefits :
³ ¹Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ;
² Who ¹healeth all thy diseases ;
⁴ Who ²redeemeth thy life from destruction ;
³ Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies ;
⁵ Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things* ;
¹ Heb. *stand*.

life." Life is likened to a line of a definite length ; and the Psalmist (*v.* 24) appeals to God, by His own infinite existence, not to snatch him away ere the half of his short length, or course, be run.

27. *Thou art the same*] Lit. "Thou art He" (as in Isai. xli. 4, xlii. 4). The idea is that God is the same and unchangeable. Heaven and earth, and the elements, are elsewhere described as eternal (cxlviii. 6), but are here contrasted with God, as transitory and passing. The sublime topic of God's eternity furnishes the Psalmist with an assurance that one day surely, if not in his own day, His everlasting promise will be accomplished.

28. *shall continue*] Or, "shall dwell before thee in a home" (see xxxvii. 29, lxxviii. 16, 18). The wishes and expectations (*vr.* 16, 17 &c.) of this Psalm are fulfilled in their obvious sense by the restoration of the people, and by the re-appearance of Jehovah in Zion. But there is a deeper foresight in the Psalm ; and its words in the verses quoted are fulfilled in a yet higher sense by Christ's appearance (cp. Heb. i. 10-12). A narrative of His deeds has been written for us who come after (*v.* 18) : a people unborn and created anew by His Spirit praises Him in Psalms and hymns everywhere. But His coming in the flesh does not exhaust the applicability of the Psalm to Him. The gathering to Him of kingdoms and peoples is only partially accomplished : and we of this day wait as did the Psalmist for His coming again, for His final appearance in glory.

CIII. A Psalm commemorating Jehovah's manifold mercies ; but chiefly His

compassion in forgiving sin, and bearing with His people's weakness (*vr.* 1-18).

The inscription assigns the Psalm to David : and the Syriac Version describes it as written by him in old age, after experience of sin and its chastisement, and of God's infinite loving-kindness. Certain Aramaic forms in the original language of *vr.* 3, 4, &c., seem, however, to indicate a later author. By whomsoever composed, it breathes a spirit of faith and hope all but evangelical, and is composed with a pathos that evidences a soul tried by real sin, sorrow, and suffering, and rescued by God's mercy. It should be compared with Ps. xxiii.

1. *all that is within me* &c.] The Psalmist calls upon his understanding, heart, and all their powers, to unite in the work of praise.

2. *all his benefits*] *i.e.* The sum, which is infinitely great, of His benefits.

3. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities," so that not one is unforgiven ; and "healeth all thy diseases," so that not a trace of one remains.

Sickness of body (and so of mind) is so naturally connected with sin as its reward, that we are not surprised to find them connected in Scripture (see marg. ref.). The words "healeth all thy diseases" refer to particular instances of God's healing power exhibited in the case of the Psalmist who sings, but they may also be extended to the healing of all ailments of body, mind, and spirit, by Divine grace.

5. *thy mouth*] The word so rendered is of doubtful meaning. The Chaldee Version interprets it "thy day of age," a transla-

So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

^f Isai. 40. 31.

6 ^oThe LORD executeth righteousness
And judgment for all that are oppressed.

^g Ps. 146. 7.

7 ^aHe made known his ways unto Moses,
His acts unto the children of Israel.

^a Ps. 147. 10.

8 ^tThe LORD is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and ^lplenteous in mercy.

^t Deut. 5. 10.

9 ^kHe will not always chide :

Neh. 9. 17.

Neither will he keep *his* anger for ever.

Ps. 86. 15.

10 ⁱHe hath not dealt with us after our sins ;
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Jer. 32. 18.

^k Ps. 30. 5.

Isai. 57. 10.

Jer. 3. 5.

Mic. 7. 18.

ⁱ Ezra 9. 13.

^m Ps. 57. 10.

Eph. 3. 18.

11 ^mFor ^aas the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 ^aAs far as the east is from the west,

^m Isai. 43. 25.

So far hath he ⁿremoved our transgressions from us.

Mic. 7. 18.

13 ^oLike as a father pitieth *his* children,
So the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

^o Mal. 3. 17.

14 For he knoweth our frame ;

ⁿHe remembereth that we *are* ^qdust.

ⁿ Ps. 78. 39.

^q Gen. 3. 19.

Eccles. 12. 7.

^r Ps. 90. 5, 6.

1 Pet. 1. 24.

^s Job 14. 1.

Jam. 1. 10.

^t Job 7. 10.

^u 20. 9.

15 *As for* man, ^rhis days *are* as grass :

^sAs a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and ^uit is gone ;

And ^t'the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting
upon them that fear him,

And his righteousness ⁿunto children's children ;

^u Ex. 20. 6.

18 ^zTo such as keep his covenant,

^z Deut. 7. 9.

And to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared his ^vthrone in the heavens ;
And ^ahis kingdom ruleth over all.

^v Ps. 11. 4.

^z Ps. 47. 2.

Dan. 4. 25.

¹ Heb. *great of mercy.*

² Heb. *according to the*

height of the heaven.

³ Heb. *it is not.*

tion which has the advantage of making the two parts of the verse in some sort to correspond : "Who satisfieth thine age with good : so that thy youth is renewed like an eagle." If David wrote this Psalm in old age the verse in this rendering would have a special significance. The longings of a declining age can only be satisfied by faith in God, the Giver of hope better than the natural life.

So that thy youth &c.] Youthful strength renewed by Divine gift is compared to an eagle's strength (cp. the Prayer-Book Version).

7. *He made known*] Generally, by His revelation of Himself as described in Scripture : specially as described in Ex. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 6. "His ways" are the ways in which He Himself walks (xxv. 4, lxxvii. 2, lxxvii. 19). "His acts" are His deeds of righteousness, deliverance, and sustentation (ix. 11, lxxviii. 11. See John v. 17).

9. Ex. xxxiv. 6, the text of this Psalm, is often quoted by Moses himself (Ex. xxxiv. 9 ; Num. xiv. 18) in explanation and mitigation of the rigid sentence of Ex. xx. 5, 6 ;

and after Moses, by the Prophets in all ages (see marg. *reff.*).

13. God is described in Deut. xxxii. 6 ; Job x. 8 ; Isai. lxiii. 16, &c., as the Father of His people : but here the relation is expressed in still more tender phrase (see Matt. vii. 7, 11). The life and death of "God manifest in the flesh," are the best comment upon these words of prophecy.

15. For similar images see marg. *reff.* The original word used for "man" expresses his weakness and littleness.

16. *the wind passeth &c.*] The east wind (Jer. iv. 11, 12) changes in a moment a garden into a waste. The place in which the flower grew is as if it had never been there ; it has no recollection of the day when it grew there and flourished. As the flower that was and is not, so is man's estate and hope. But God's mercy (v. 17) encompasses those that love Him as the heavens encompass the earth. His justice, that is, His faithfulness to promise, reaches to a thousand generations of those that remember His commandments to do them. The *condition* of God's lovingkindness is repeated three

- * Ps. 148. 2. 20 "Bless the LORD, ye his angels,
 b Matt. 6. 10. 'That excel in strength, that do his commandments,
 Heb. 1. 14. Harkening unto the voice of his word.
 c Gen. 32. 2. 21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye 'his hosts;
 Josh. 5. 14. 'Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
 Ps. 68. 17.
 d Dan. 7. 9, 10. 22 'Bless the LORD, all his works—in all places of his dominion:
 Heb. 1. 14. 'Bless the LORD, O my soul.
 * Ps. 145. 10.
 f ver. 1.

PSALM CIV.

- a Ps. 103. 1. 1 BLESS "the LORD, O my soul.
 ver. 35. O LORD my God, thou art very great;
 b Ps. 83. 1. 'Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
 c Dan. 7. 9. 2 'Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment:
 d Isai. 40. 22. 'Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:
 e 45. 12. 3 'Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters:
 f Amos 9. 6. 'Who maketh the clouds his chariot:
 g Isai. 19. 1. 'Who walketh upon the wings of the wind:
 h Ps. 18. 10. 4 'Who maketh his angels spirits;—⁴his ministers a flaming fire:
 i Heb. 1. 7. 5 2 ^kWho laid the foundations of the earth,
 j 2 Kin. 2. 11. That it should not be removed for ever.
 k 6. 17. 6 'Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment:
 l Job 26. 7. The waters stood above the mountains.
 m 38. 4, 6.
 n Ps. 24. 2.
 o 136. 6.
 p Eccles. 1. 4.
 q Gen. 7. 19. 1 Heb. *mighty in strength*: See Ps. 78. 25. 2 Heb. *He hath founded the earth upon her bases*.

times (vv. 11, 13, 17): it is for them that fear Him.

20-22. The Angels (or Archangels) close to God's throne, are first addressed: next, the unnumbered hosts of ministering spirits that do His will: next, all His works: and last of all the Psalmist, after a commemoration of Jehovah's perfections, mercy, long-suffering, tenderness, and ineffable majesty, stirs up his own spirit to join the chorus of universal praise.

CIV. A noble nature-Psalm, which is discriminated from classic or heathen nature-songs by this, that God in it is all in all. Everything is created by Him: everything lives by and through Him.

This Psalm is appointed in our Church for Whit-Sunday. The creation of the material world in the beginning, its perpetual preservation, and the renewal of life through the breath of God, suggest naturally the Christian doctrine of a new creation of the spirit of man, and its perpetual maintenance by the Holy Spirit. If God withdraws His breath, all creatures (v. 29) return to dust: if He withdraws His quickening Spirit from the soul of a man, it dies to Him. If He imparts a new ray of divine illumination, it lives again; as the outward world (v. 30) is renewed day by day, and lives always through His life-giving word.

1. *Thou art clothed &c.* i.e. "In creating out of nothing, or chaos, this outward form of glorious nature, Thou hast put on a faint, and real, but the only imaginable, palpable, image of a concealed ineffable glory."

2-4. Consult the marg. ref. The intense

glory of the invisible God is concealed by light, the garment in which He is arrayed. He stretches out the canopy of Heaven, as a man stretches out the curtain of a tent. He constructs His pavilion in the watery firmament above the clouds, as a man builds an upper chamber with joists and rafters. Like a king He rides forth thence upon His chariot the clouds, and sends His messengers, winds, and a flame of fire, to execute His commands.

In the Hebrew, the words rendered "coverest thyself," "stretchest out" &c. express the original act of creation, and also the perpetual maintaining power of God. If the creative power for an instant ceased to act, all would collapse.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (marg. ref.) cites the LXX. Version of v. 4, and argues as if the Angels of God were pointedly mentioned in it. Such argument, though not conveyed by the words in their literal meaning, may yet be regarded as naturally following from them, and lying just below the surface of them. God's Angels, at His command, may put on the outward form of nature's elements, and execute His bidding, as fire and flame, storm and tempest.

5-8. The marg. rendering of v. 5 is more literal. He laid the foundation of the earth, and fixed it firmly upon nothing. The great deep covered its solid nucleus, and rose above the tops of the primeval mountains. A word from Him, a voice of His threatening thunder, and the waters fly terrified away—rise impetuously above the

- 7 ^mAt thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
- 8 ¹ⁿThey go up by the mountains;
They go down by the valleys unto ^othe place which thou hast founded for them.
- 9 ^pThou hast set a bound that they may not pass over;
^qThat they turn not again to cover the earth.
- 10 ^rHe sendeth the springs into the valleys,
Which ^srun among the hills.
- 11 They give drink to every beast of the field:
The wild asses ^tquench their thirst.
- 12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,
Which ^using among the branches.
- 13 ^vHe watereth the hills from his chambers:
^wThe earth is satisfied with ^xthe fruit of thy works.
- 14 ^yHe causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man;
That he may bring forth ^zfood out of the earth;
- 15 And ^awine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And ^boil to make his face to shine,
And bread which strengtheneth man's heart.
- 16 The trees of the LORD are full of sap;
The cedars of Lebanon, ^cwhich he hath planted;
- 17 Where the birds make their nests:
As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.
- 18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goat;
And the rocks for ^dthe conies.
- 19 ^eHe appointed the moon for seasons:
The sun ^fknoweth his going down.
- 20 ^gThou makest darkness, and it is night:
- ¹ Or, *The mountains ascend, the valleys descend.* ³ Heb. *walk.* ⁶ Heb. *to make his face shine with oil, or, more than oil.*
² Heb. *Who sendeth.* ⁴ Heb. *break.*
 ⁵ Heb. *give a voice.*

tops of the mountains, then fall down deep into the lowest valleys, till they find the beds appointed for them of God. The words of the Psalm put the original wondrous process graphically before the eye. The change of tense, too, from past to present, in *rr.* 6, 7, 8, is expressive, and paints the scene in its progress. In *r.* 6 "stood" should be *stand*: in *r.* 7 "fled" should be *flee*: and "hasted away" should be *haste away*.

According to the marginal rendering of *r.* 8, the effect of the waters (*r.* 7) passing into the places appointed for them, is described by the emergence of the primeval mountains and by the discovery of the valleys which existed in earth's original state, when mantled by the deep. This would connect the latter part of *r.* 8 with *r.* 7: "At Thy rebuke they flee, at the voice of Thy thunder they hasten away (the mountains ascend, the valleys descend) to the places which Thou hast founded for them!"

9. This verse describes poetically, and exultingly, the permanence of nature, and

the imprisonment of ocean, despite its strength and vastness, in its appointed bed. The thought of this occurs to all who look upon the sea, and notice its wonderful movements, apparently so irresistible, yet confined to such strict limits for ever.

13. His plenteous rain supplies the mountain springs, and abundantly satisfies the earth. It is the fruit of "His works," of His chambers in the clouds (*r.* 3), out of which He pours His treasures.

15. The Psalmist passes from the general subject of provision for man and beast (*rr.* 10-14) to particularize man's comforts and luxuries. Oil is mentioned here with corn and wine, as a product of the earth given by God for food, and thus helpful to man's pleasure and enjoyment. The practice of anointing can scarcely be alluded to here.

16. Lit. *The trees of Jehovah are satisfied, or, have their fill* (i.e. with rain).

17. *conies*] The old English name for rabbits. See Lev. xi. 5 note.

19. The moon marks seasons (marg. ref.): the sun defines day and night.

Wherein ¹ all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.

- * Job 38. 39. 21 *The young lions roar after their prey,
Joel 1. 20. And seek their meat from God.
22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,
And lay them down in their dens.
† Gen. 3. 19. 23 Man goeth forth unto ¹his work and to his labour until the
evening.
* Prov. 3. 19. 24 *O LORD, how manifold are thy works !
In wisdom hast thou made them all :
The earth is full of thy riches.
25 So is this great and wide sea,
Wherein *are* things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.
26 There go the ships :
* Job 41. 1. There is that ¹leviathan, whom thou hast ²made to play
therein.
† Ps. 136. 25. 27 †These wait all upon thee ;
& 145. 15. That thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.
& 147. 9. 28 That thou givest them they gather :
Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.
29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled :
* Job 34. 14, 15. *Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
Ps. 146. 4. 30 †Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created :
Eccles. 12. 7. And thou renewest the face of the earth.
† Isai. 32. 15. 31 The glory of the LORD ³shall endure for ever :
Ezek. 37. 9. The LORD ^mshall rejoice in his works.
* Gen. 1. 31. 32 He looketh on the earth, and it ⁿtrembleth :
* Hab. 3. 10. *He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.
* Ps. 144. 5. 33 †I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live :
† Ps. 63. 4. & 146. 2. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34 My meditation of him shall be sweet :
I will be glad in the LORD.
† Ps. 37. 38. 35 Let ^qthe sinners be consumed out of the earth,
Prov. 2. 22. And let the wicked be no more.
* ver. 1. *Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

¹ Heb. *all the beasts thereof*
do trample on the forest.

² Heb. *formed*.

³ Heb. *shall be*.

24. *riches*] The idea is "property," or "possession," derived from original creation. See Gen. xiv. 19.

25. *things creeping &c.*] More correctly, "a mass of moving things without number, living creatures, small with great." Leviathan may be, here, the whale, the mightiest of sea monsters.

32. *He toucheth the hills*] A reference to the lightning and its effects.

35. *i.e.* "As for sinners (the blot of this glorious scene), they shall perish at last from the earth, and God shall be all in all."

It may be that the Psalm is not simply a song of praise suggested by the contemplation of God in His works ; but, written in the midst of trial and weariness of sinners, a soothing meditation upon God's mani-

festest mercy. Such it has proved to multitudes of Christians. We are assured by St. John (i. 3 ; see also 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; Heb. i. 2) that Christ took part in the work of creation. At the Transfiguration He clothed His ineffable brightness with light (v. 2) to symbolize His glory as God. He fed the multitudes, commanded the winds and waves, ruled the tenants of the deep, to suggest His Divine power over creation ; and by His Spirit, which He has poured abundantly on His followers, He has cast a new light upon the whole Psalm. The Redemption, through Christ, of sinners, and the ultimate conquest of sin and death, through His victory over both, seem figured prophetically ; at the least, they are desired ardently, and, perhaps, are anticipated in the last verses of it.

PSALM CV.

- 1 O ^aGIVE thanks unto the LORD ; call upon his name :
^bMake known his deeds among the people.
 2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him :
^cTalk ye of all his wondrous works.
 3 Glory ye in his holy name :
 Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
 4 Seek the LORD, and his strength :—^dseek his face evermore.
 5 ^eRemember his marvellous works that he hath done ;
 His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth ;
 6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant,
 Ye children of Jacob his chosen.
 7 He *is* the LORD our God :
^fHis judgments *are* in all the earth.
 8 He hath ^gremembered his covenant for ever,
 The word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.
 9 ^hWhich covenant he made with Abraham,
 And his oath unto Isaac ;
 10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,
 And to Israel for an everlasting covenant :
 11 Saying, 'Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
ⁱThe lot of your inheritance :
 12 ^kWhen they were *but* a few men in number ;
 Yea, very few, ^land strangers in it.
 13 When they went from one nation to another,
 From *one* kingdom to another people ;
 14 ^mHe suffered no man to do them wrong :
 Yea, ⁿhe reprov'd kings for their sakes ;
- ^a Isai. 12. 4.
^b Ps. 145. 4, 5, 11.
^c Ps. 77. 12. & 119. 27.
^d Ps. 27. 8.
^e Ps. 77. 11.
^f Isai. 26. 9.
^g Luke 1. 72.
^h Gen. 17. 2. & 22. 16, &c.
ⁱ Luke 1. 73. Heb. 6. 17.
^j Gen. 13. 15. & 15. 18.
^k Gen. 34. 30. Deut. 7. 7. & 28. 5.
^l Heb. 11. 9.
^m Gen. 35. 5.
ⁿ Gen. 12. 17. & 20. 3, 7.
¹ Heb. *the cord*.

CV. A Psalm nearly resembling lxxviii., and containing an epitome of God's dealings with His people, from the time of the promise to the occupation of Canaan. Its purpose is to stir up faith in Him to all time. The first fifteen verses begin the Psalm recited in 1 Chr. xvi. 8-22 (see note there, and the introduction to Pss. xcvi., cvi). This Psalm is connected with Pss. civ. and cvi. in various ways. They are all Hallelujah Psalms: Pss. civ. and cv. end with Hallelujah; Ps. cvi. begins and ends with it. Ps. civ. describes God's wonders in creation; Pss. cv. and cvi. in history. It is thought, that all were written to console Israel during the Captivity.

Verses 1-6 contain the introduction: vv. 7-15 the purpose of the Psalm; vv. 16-45, the conclusion, in which His purpose in all His doings, enumerated in vv. 16-41 (consult the marg. ref.), is again described.

1. *call upon his name*] Call upon Him with praise and prayer (Gen. iv. 26); by His name Jehovah, in which He revealed Himself (Ex. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5).

4. *Seek the LORD &c.*] Seek Him where His mighty strength abides: seek Him where His face is seen in glory, *i.e.* in His Temple in which He dwells (lxiii. 2), and in which His face is seen of His worshippers.

5. *judgments of his mouth &c.*] His decrees
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touching His people and their foes, and issuing in events (Ex. vi. 6, vii. 4, xii. 12; cp. cxix. 13); decrees, as of a king exercising authority, and dispensing law, everywhere (v. 7).

6. The reason for calling upon Jehovah: "ye are the seed of Abraham and Jacob" (some MSS., *Israel*. See 1 Chr. xvi. 13).

8. *He hath remembered &c.*] Even though He seemed to forget it (vv. 11-42) in Captivity and desolation.

the word] *i.e.* The Covenant conveyed by word (see v. 42), His Holy promise, or word.

11. *The lot*] Marg. "the cord," with which, as it were, the portion of inheritance is measured (see xvi. 6, lxxviii. 55; Mic. ii. 5; Gen. xiii. 17). The change of number, "thee," and then "your," is explained by the circumstance that the Covenant was made in the first place with Abraham, afterwards with Isaac and Jacob.

12. 1 Chr. xvi. 19 has a reading which connects this verse with v. 11; the text here rather connects it with vv. 13-15. It exhibits in fuller light than the verses preceding the Providence of God which guarded His people, when few in number and strangers, in the land one day to be theirs.

13. The wandering life of the Patriarchs is described (see Gen. xii. 1, 9, xiii. 18, xx. 1).

14. See marg. ref.

15 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed,
And do my prophets no harm.

- ° Gen. 41. 54. 16 Moreover °he called for a famine upon the land :
 ° Lev. 26. 26. He brake the whole °staff of bread.
 Isai. 3. 1. 17 °He sent a man before them,
 Ezek. 4. 16. *Even Joseph, who °was sold for a servant :*
 ° Gen. 45. 5. 18 °Whose feet they hurt with fetters :—¹he was laid in iron :
 & 50. 20. 19 Until the time that his word came :
 ° Gen. 37. 28, 36. °The word of the LORD tried him.
 ° Gen. 39. 20. 20 °The king sent and loosed him ;
 & 40. 15. *Even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.*
 ° Gen. 41. 25. 21 °He made him lord of his house,
 ° Gen. 41. 14. And ruler of all his °substance :
 ° Gen. 41. 40. 22 To bind his princes at his pleasure ;
 And teach his senators wisdom.
 ° Gen. 46. 6. 23 °Israel also came into Egypt ;
 ° Ps. 78. 51. And Jacob sojourned °in the land of Ham.
 & 106. 22. 24 And °he increased his people greatly ;
 ° Ex. 1. 7. And made them stronger than their enemies.
 ° Ex. 1. 8. 25 °He turned their heart to hate his people,
 To deal subtilly with his servants.
 ° Ex. 3. 10. 26 °He sent Moses his servant ;
 & 4. 12, 14. And Aaron °whom he had chosen.
 ° Num. 16. 5. 27 °They shewed °his signs among them,
 & 17. 5. And wonders in the land of Ham.
 ° Ex. 7—12. 28 °He sent darkness, and made it dark ;
 Ps. 78. 43. And °they rebelled not against his word.
 ° Ps. 106. 22. 29 °He sent darkness, and made it dark ;
 ° Ex. 10. 22. And °they rebelled not against his word.
 ° Ps. 99. 7.

¹ Heb. *his soul came into iron.*

² Heb. *possession.*

³ Heb. *words of his signs.*

15. *mine anointed*] Lit. "My Messiahs," *i.e.* My chosen, consecrated ones. The word "Messiah" is used in a general sense : consecration to office by anointing is the custom of a later age than that of the Patriarchs (see 1 K. xix. 16).

my prophets] See Gen. xx. 7 note. The word is used in its general sense :—"My servants inspired to know My will." In Ex. vii. 1 (cp. iv. 15) the same word rather indicates a man inspired of God to declare His will. The two meanings are intimately connected. Abraham was a man inspired to see the future (v. 11), as well as a Prophet holding direct intercourse with God. Isaac and Jacob were Prophets in this latter sense (Gen. xxv. 21, xxviii. 17, &c.), and also in the more common meaning of the term (Gen. xxvii. 27, xlix).

16. *the land*] Canaan.

17. The meaning is, "He sent one before the rest to make ready : it was Joseph, sold for a servant, according to God's decree."

18. See marg. ref. note. Joseph's imprisonment is not there described as severe ; but it may have been so at first. For expressions similar to that of the marg. see Ivii. 4 ; Isai. xli. 2 marg.

19. *i.e.* "Until the time that Jehovah's word to Joseph came true, the promise of Jehovah tried him." The prophetic word

came true : the promise (Gen. xxxvii. 5, 9, &c.) tried him, *i.e.* put him on his trial (Gen. xxxix. 7 &c.), exhibited his triumph, and was accomplished. Others interpret "his word" as Joseph's word, and "the word of the Lord" as the gift of prophecy given to Joseph : "Until the time when his interpretation of dreams in prison came true, and his prophetic gift (Gen. xli. 16 &c.) exhibited him as chosen of God ; or shewed him to be true and innocent." The rendering of the Prayer-Book Version, "his cause," seems to mean "the general story about him, his deeds of innocence, which at the last become known."

20. *The king &c.*] See marg. ref. : "Pharaoh sent and loosed him ; the ruler of the people (sent) and let him go free."

22. Joseph, once himself bound in fetters, had power to bind the princes of Egypt (Gen. xli. 44) : and being gifted with wisdom above all Pharaoh's counsellors (Gen. xli. 38, 39), was able to instruct them.

23. *Israel*] *i.e.* Jacob, as expressed in the next line. On the land of Ham, see Gen. x. 6 &c.

25. It must be recollected that the malice was in the Egyptians themselves, lest blame be imputed to God.

28. *And they rebelled not*] Most commentators refer these words to Moses and Aaron ; others, with less probability, to the Egypt-

- 29 'He turned their waters into blood,—and slew their fish.
 30 *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance,
 In the chambers of their kings.
 31 'He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies,
 And lice in all their coasts.
 32 ^mHe gave them hail for rain,
 And flaming fire in their land.
 33 "He smote their vines also and their fig trees;
 And brake the trees of their coasts.
 34 "He spake, and the locusts came,
 And caterpillars, and that without number,
 35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land,
 And devoured the fruit of their ground.
 36 "He smote also all the firstborn in their land,
 "The chief of all their strength.
 37 "He brought them forth also with silver and gold:
 And *there was not one feeble person* among their tribes.
 38 "Egypt was glad when they departed:
 For the fear of them fell upon them.
 39 'He spread a cloud for a covering;
 And fire to give light in the night.
 40 "The people asked, and he brought quails,
 And ^zsatisfied them with the bread of heaven.
 41 "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out;
 They ran in the dry places *like a river*.
 42 For he remembered ^zhis holy promise,
 And Abraham his servant.
 43 And he brought forth his people with joy,
 And his chosen with ^zgladness:
 44 "And gave them the lands of the heathen:
 And they inherited the labour of the people;
 45 "That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.
^zPraise ye the LORD.

¹ Heb. *He gave their rain hail.*

² Heb. *singing.*

³ Heb. *Hallelujah.*

' Ex. 7. 20.
 Ps. 78. 44.
 * Ex. 8. 6.
 Ps. 78. 45.
 ' Ex. 8. 17, 24.
 Ps. 78. 45.
^m Ex. 9. 23,
 25.
 Ps. 78. 48.
 " Ps. 78. 47.
 " Ex. 10. 4,
 13, 14.
 Ps. 78. 46.
 " Ex. 12. 29.
 Ps. 78. 51.
 " Gen. 49. 3.
 " Ex. 12. 35.
 • Ex. 12. 33.
 ' Ex. 13. 21.
 Neh. 9. 12.
 " Ex. 16. 12.
 Ps. 78. 19, 27.
 " Ps. 78. 24.
 " Ex. 17. 6.
 Num. 20. 11.
 Ps. 78. 15.
 1 Cor. 10. 4.
 " Gen. 15. 14.
 " Deut. 6. 10,
 11.
 Josh. 13. 7,
 &c.
 Ps. 78. 55.
 " Deut. 4. 1,
 40.
 & 6. 21—25.

ians, who for a time at least (Exod. x. 24), yielded obedience to His word.

37. *not one feeble person*] See Isai. v. 27, lxiii. 13. Not one feeble one was prevented by his feebleness from following. Some (see Ex. xiii. 18) render "there was not one feeble one among His tribes" (cp. cxxii. 4), a more expressive rendering.

39. *He spread a cloud &c.*] The idea here expressed is that the cloud was spread out as a protection against the sun (cp. Ex. xl. 19, 34—38; Num. ix. 15, x. 34; Isai. iv. 5).

40. *bread of heaven*] Manna.

44. *the labour of the people*] The cities, vineyards, and cultivated fields of the people (Deut. vi. 10, 11; Isai. xlv. 14). They "inherited" these on the condition, that, unlike the inhabitants whose labour they enjoyed, they should for ever be a people devoted to Jehovah, and steadfast in His Law.

The connexion between this Psalm and the next must be noticed. Ps. cv. details God's mercies to His servants; Ps. cvi. the doings of Israel in return. The short sententious style of the poetry of these Psalms

shortly recounting God's dealing with His people, and Israel's behaviour under it, may have been intended to assist in committing them to memory. They may have served as catechisms for the instruction of the young.

Throughout the Psalm the author supposes the perpetual miraculous interference of Jehovah. The history is incomprehensible, and a mere myth, without miracle. Its substantial truth is proved by the life of the Jewish people founded upon it, and by the literature of the people which also is founded upon it. If miracle be allowed, its measure may be discussed, without fear, but with reverence suitable to the field of God's operations. The details of the miracles are of course copied from Exodus, but they are realized with a singular intensity; inexplicable except upon the supposition of their occurrence, and of the profound impression made by them upon the Jewish mind.

The ninth plague is put first (v. 28), and the fifth and sixth are omitted; but the order is generally that of Exod. vii. &c. The order in lxxviii. 44 &c. is different.

PSALM CVI.

- 1 ¹ PRAISE ye the LORD.
^a O ^b give thanks unto the LORD ; for *he is good* :
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 ^c Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD ?
Who can shew forth all his praise ?
- 3 Blessed *are* they that keep judgment,
 And he that ^d doeth righteousness at ^e all times.
- 4 ^f Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto*
 thy people :
 O visit me with thy salvation ;
- 5 That I may see the good of thy chosen,
 That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
 That I may glory with thine inheritance.
- 6 ^g We have sinned with our fathers,
 We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
- 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt ;
 They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies ;
^h But provoked *him* at the sea, *even at the Red sea.*
- 8 Nevertheless he saved them ⁱ for his name's sake,
^k That he might make his mighty power to be known.
- 9 ^l He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up :
 So ^m he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.
- 10 And he ⁿ saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*,
 And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 ^o And the waters covered their enemies :
 There was not one of them left.
- 12 ^p Then believed they his words ;—they sang his praise.
- 13 ^q They soon forgot his works ;—they waited not for his counsel :
- 14 ^r But ^s lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
 And tempted God in the desert.
- 15 ^t And he gave them their request ;
- ¹ Heb. *Hallelujah.* ² Heb. *They made haste, they forgot.* ³ Heb. *lusted a lust.*

CVI. Pss. lxxviii., cv., cvi., are in some sort supplementary one to the other. Ps. lxxviii. is didactic : Ps. cv. a song of praise : Ps. cvi. a confession of sin and prayer for pardon (cp. Dan. ix. 4, 5 ; Neh. ix. 4). All these Psalms seem of the date of the Captivity ; Ps. cvi., perhaps, written towards its conclusion. The Ps. in 1 Chr. xvi. of which vv. 1, 47, 48 of this Psalm formed a part, appears to have been put together afterwards, and used at the time of the composition of the Book of Chronicles ; or a portion only of it may have proceeded from David, and have been added to in subsequent times.

A characteristic of the Psalm is a perpetual allusion to, and frequent quotation of, the words of Exodus, of Isaiah, and of the later Psalms (see marg. reff. throughout).

3. If any distinction is to be made between "keeping judgment" and "doing righteousness," the first may describe inward rectitude, the second its outward exhibition in act.

4, 5. A prayer for individual good to arise (if it shall please God) from favour shewn to His people.

6, 7. The Psalmist speaks of himself and people, of the present time and of olden times from the very first, as one family, with one father : "We in our exile, and our fathers from Moses downwards, are examples of disobedience and its punishment."

9. *he led them through the depths &c.* Or, "He led them through the sea" of hollow abysses and rough projecting rocky eminences, as though it had been through a "level wilderness" of dry land.

12. The song of praise is mentioned, not to illustrate the faith and gratitude, but to shew the fickleness of the people, who instantly forgot His works.

13, 14. See marg. They waited not a moment to see what God proposed ; but made *haste*, and *lusted a lust*, and *tempted*—or tried and *endeavoured* to constrain—Him, with importunate eager desire.

15. *leanness* The Hebrew word is used to describe the character and effects of the

- But 'sent leanness into their soul.
- 16 "They envied Moses also in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the LORD.
- 17 "The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
And covered the company of Abiram.
- 18 "And a fire was kindled in their company ;
The flame burned up the wicked.
- 19 "They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshipped the molten image.
- 20 Thus "they^a changed their glory
Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.
- 21 They "forgot God their saviour,
Which had done great things in Egypt ;
- 22 Wondrous works in "the land of Ham,
And terrible things by the Red sea.
- 23 "Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
Had not Moses his chosen "stood before him in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.
- 24 Yea, they despised ¹ the pleasant land,
They "believed not his word :
- 25 "But murmured in their tents
And hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.
- 26 "Therefore he "lifted up his hand against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness :
- 27 ² /To overthrow their seed also among the nations,
And to "scatter them in the lands.
- 28 "They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor,
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
- 29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions :
And the plague brake in upon them.

¹ Heb. *a land of desire*.² Heb. *To make them fall*.^a Isai. 10. 16.^a Num. 16. 1, &c.^a Num. 16. 31, 32.

Deut. 11. 6.

^a Num. 16. 35, 46.^a Ex. 32. 4.^a Jer. 2. 11.

Rom. 1. 23.

^a Ps. 78. 11,

12.

^a Ps. 78. 51.

& 105. 23, 27.

^a Ex. 32. 10,

11, 32.

Deut. 9. 19.

25. & 10. 10.

Ezek. 20. 13.

^a Ezek. 13. 5.

& 22. 30.

^a Deut. 8. 7.

Ezek. 20. 6.

^a Heb. 3. 18.^a Num. 14. 2,

27.

^a Num. 14. 28,

&c.

Ps. 95. 11.

Ezek. 20. 15.

Heb. 3. 11, 18.

^a Deut. 32. 40.^a Ps. 44. 11.

Ezek. 20. 23.

^a Num. 25.

2, 3.

Deut. 4. 3.

& 32. 17.

Hos. 9. 10.

Rev. 2. 14.

plague, or withering sickness, by which, on account of their lust, thousands were slain.

soul] The word means here "life," or that part of the system which is nurtured by food (Num. xi. 6).

17. Two of the principal offenders only, the sons of Reuben, are mentioned in the Psalm, as sometimes in the original narrative (Num. xvi. 25, 27).

19. *They made a calf in Horeb &c.*] In Horeb the Mount of God, on which the Divine glory rested (marg. ref.; Deut. ix. 8-12). They acted in defiance of the commandment (Exod. xx. 4, 5). "A calf" is a contemptuous description of the image which they worshipped in Horeb.

20. *they changed their glory into &c.*] Or, "they bartered their glory for" &c.

their glory] i.e. "Jehovah the glory of His people, by Whose aid they had obtained a name above all peoples:" or, "Jehovah their glorious God, Who had accompanied them in the cloud and fire, and Whom they had seen close to them in Sinai in His majesty."

23. Moses His chosen stood before Him in the gap, as a valiant soldier guarding his city when a breach is made in the wall, and

stayed Him by prayers and entreaties, lest He should destroy them. Cp. marg. ref. for similar images.

24. *they despised &c.*] i.e. "They relinquished all desire for the pleasant land (Jer. iii. 19; Zech. vii. 14) when they heard the report of the spies: they credited not His oft-repeated promise, that they should possess it" (see Num. xiv. 31).

26. *he lifted up &c.*] i.e. "He lifted up His hand, and swore (Ex. vi. 8 marg.) that they should not see the land &c."

27. *to scatter &c.*] The threat of exile is not in Numbers: it comes from Lev. xxvi. 33, of which the words are repeated in Deut. xxviii. 64; see also Ezek. v. 12; Jer. ix. 16.

28. *They joined*] i.e. "They entered into close connexion and communion (cp. 1 Cor. x. 18), with Baal-Peor (or, lord, worshipped on the summit of Peor), the Moabite idol, and ate sacrifices offered to dead things, instead of to the living God" (see Jer. x. 10; Ps. cxv. 3). The idols of the Moabites are described contemptuously as "dead things" (Wis. xiii. 10).

29. *brake in upon &c.*] The image is that of a river which has burst its barriers (see Exod. xix. 24).

- ^a Num. 25. 7, 8. 30 ^aThen stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment:
And ^{so} the plague was stayed.
- ^c Num. 25. 11, 12, 13. 31 And that was counted unto him ^ofor righteousness
Unto all generations for evermore.
- ^p Num. 20. 3, 13. 32 ^pThey angered *him* also at the waters of strife,
^qSo that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:
- Ps. 81. 7. 33 ^rBecause they provoked his spirit,
^qNum. 20. 12. So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.
^rNum. 20. 10.
- ^s Judg. 1. 21, 27, &c. 34 ^sThey did not destroy the nations,
^tDeut. 7. 2, 16. ^tConcerning whom the LORD commanded them:
- ^u Judg. 2. 2. 35 ^uBut were mingled among the heathen,
& 3. 5, 6. And learned their works.
Isai. 2. 9. 36 And ^vthey served their idols:—^vwhich were a snare unto them.
- 1 Cor. 5. 6. 37 Yea, ^vthey sacrificed their sons
^w Judg. 2. 12, 13, 17. And their daughters unto ^wdevils,
^x Ex. 23. 33. 38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of
Judg. 2. 3, 14, 15. their daughters,
^y 2 K. 16. 3. Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan:
Isai. 57. 5. And ^bthe land was polluted with blood.
- Ezek. 16. 20. 39 Thus were they ^cdefiled with their own works,
^a Lev. 17. 7. And ^dwent a whoring with their own inventions.
2 Chr. 11. 15. 40 Therefore ^ewas the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people,
1 Cor. 10. 20. Insomuch that he abhorred ^fhis own inheritance.
^b Num. 35. 33. 41 And ^ghe gave them into the hand of the heathen;
^c Ezek. 20. 18, 30, 31. And they that hated them ruled over them.
- ^d Lev. 17. 7. 42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
Num. 15. 39. And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
^e Ps. 78. 59. 43 ^hMany times did he deliver them;
^f Deut. 9. 29. But they provoked *him* with their counsel,
^g Judg. 2. 14. And were ⁱbrought low for their iniquity.
- Neh. 9. 27. 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction,
^h Judg. 2. 16. When ^jhe heard their cry:
- ⁱ Judg. 3. 9. 45 ^kAnd he remembered for them his covenant,
& 4. 3, &c. And ^lrepented ^maccording to the multitude of his mercies.
^k Lev. 26. 41, 42. 46 ⁿHe made them also to be pitied
^l Judg. 2. 18. Of all those that carried them captives.
^m Ps. 51. 1.
& 69. 16.
Isai. 63. 7.
Lam. 3. 32.
ⁿ Ezra 9. 9.
Jer. 42. 12.

¹ Or, *impooverished, or, weakened.*

30. *executed judgment &c.*] Executed the office of a judge, according to Moses' command (see marg. ref.). It is not improbable that Phinehas, being the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron, was actually a judge to whom the command was issued.

31. *counted for righteousness*] In Gen. xv. 6 faith is counted for righteousness: here an act, springing from faith and a divine impulse, is so counted.

32. *the waters of strife*] Sometimes in the A.V. the Hebrew word Meribah is translated, as in the text; sometimes it is left untranslated.

So that it went ill &c.] As he himself says, Deut. i. 37, iii. 26, xxxii. 50, 51; Num. xx. 12, 24.

for their sakes] They provoked him to ^eit (v. 33).

33. *they provoked his spirit*] Some interpret the words of the people, or of Moses and

Aaron, provoking the Spirit of God: but the words are most naturally referred to men provoking the spirit (or soul) of Moses.

37. *unto devils*] See Deut. xxxii. 17. The original word in both places means "lords," or "masters," such as Baal (see v. 28) which means "lord," or Moloch which means "master" or "king." In 1 Cor. viii. 5, the false gods of heathendom are styled "lords;" in Wis. xiii. 2, "gods which govern the world."

39. *their own works*] The idolatrous rites which they imitated are so called because invented by man.

43. *their counsel*] Which was not His counsel (cp. Deut. xxxii. 28; Jer. vii. 24).

45. *repented*] The next verse explains in what way He shewed mercy.

46. *He made them also &c.*] The words of Solomon's prayer (1 K. viii. 50).

- 47 °Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen,
To give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.
- 48 °Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting:
And let all the people say, Amen.—¹Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CVII.

- 1 O °GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for ^bhe is good :
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
°Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy ;
- 3 And °gathered them out of the lands,
From the east, and from the west, from the north, and ²from the south.
- 4 They °wandered in °the wilderness in a solitary way ;
They found no city to dwell in.
- 5 Hungry and thirsty,—their soul fainted in them.
- 6 °Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distresses.
- 7 And he led them forth by the °right way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
- 8 °Oh that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 9 For °he satisfieth the longing soul,
And filleth the hungry soul with goodness.
- 10 Such as °sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Being °bound in affliction and iron ;

° Ps. 106. 1.

& 118. 1.

& 136. 1.

° Ps. 119. 68.

Matt. 19. 17.

° Ps. 106. 10.

° Ps. 106. 47.

Isai. 43. 5.

Jer. 29. 14.

Ezek. 39. 27,

28.

° ver. 46.

° Deut. 32.

10.

° ver. 13, 19,

28.

Ps. 50. 15.

Hos. 5. 15.

° Ezra 8. 21.

° ver. 15, 21,

31.

° Ps. 34. 10.

Luke 1. 53.

° Luke 1. 79.

° Job 36. 8.

¹ Heb. *Hallelujah*.² Heb. *from the sea*.

47. It can scarcely be doubted that these words refer to deliverance from the Babylonian Captivity, which the next Psalm (cvii. 3) speaks of as accomplished. This verse is the point of the Psalm; which touches upon sin, punishment, and mercy, the most signal of the attributes of God. The conclusion (v. 48) is an appropriate end of the fourth book, or book, generally, of Psalms of the Captivity.

CVII. There are resemblances between this Psalm and the preceding (Pss. civ.-cvi); and perhaps the author is the same. It is not unreasonable to suppose that deliverance from the Babylonian Captivity (generally suggested as the occasion of the Psalm) called forth this song of thanksgiving for deliverance in manifold trials common to man.

The song of "the redeemed" constitutes the Psalm as far as v. 32 (with the exception of vv. 2-8). The theme of the concluding portion is the same (i.e. adversity and prosperity are dependent upon God), but the treatment is general. See the marg. ref. throughout. A noticeable feature of this Psalm, in which it resembles the three preceding, is a frequent allusion to, or quotation of, Isaiah and Job.

3. *from the south*] The marginal rendering

is more literal. The word rendered "the sea" means commonly "the Mediterranean," or "the west" (see Gen. xii. 8; Exod. x. 19). In a description, such as we have here, of the points of the compass viewed from the Holy City, the points are, probably, not accurately defined; they are the rising and the setting sun, the north, and the sea; i.e. the Mediterranean Sea washing Syria, Egypt, and the south.

4. It is not easy to say what special wanderings are intended. Some traits are borrowed from the journey in the wilderness of Sinai; or, travel in distant, unexplored regions, may be meant; travel enforced of necessity, or by foreign compulsion, and of which captivity in the hands of merciless robbers might easily be an accompaniment. Such wanderers are admonished, that chance does not direct their steps, but God's mercy redeems.

8. The purport is rather, "All those described (vv. 2-7), i.e. the redeemed of God, whom He has redeemed from exile, wandering, and misery, *shall* or *ought* to sing the goodness of Jehovah."

10. The imprisonment of Joseph (cp. cv. 18) seems to furnish some traits; and the Captivity at Babylon may have suggested

- * Lam. 3. 42. 11 Because they *rebelled against the words of God,
 ° Ps. 73. 24. And contemned °the counsel of the most High;
 Luke 7. 30. 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour;
 Acts 20. 27. They fell down, and *there was* °none to help.
 ° Ps. 22. 11. 13 °Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
 Isai. 63. 5. And he saved them out of their distresses.
 ° ver. 6. 19, 28. 14 °He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
 ° Ps. 68. 6. And brake their bands in sunder.
 & 146. 7. 15 °Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,
 Acts 12. 7. And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!
 & 16. 26. 16 For he hath °broken the gates of brass,
 ° ver. 8. And cut the bars of iron in sunder.
 ° Isai. 45. 2.
- ° Lam. 3. 39. 17 Fools °because of their transgression,
 And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
 ° Job 33. 20. 18 °Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat;
 ° Job 33. 22. And they °draw near unto the gates of death.
 Ps. 9. 13. 19 °Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,
 & 88. 3. And he saveth them out of their distresses.
 ° ver. 6. 20 °He sent his word, and °healed them,
 ° 2 K. 20. 4, 5. And °delivered *them* from their destructions.
 Matt. 8. 8. 21 °Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,
 ° Ps. 30. 2. And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!
 & 103. 3. 22 And °let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
 ° Ps. 30. 3. And °declare his works with °rejoicing.
 & 49. 15. 23 They that go down to the sea in ships,
 & 103. 4. That do business in great waters;
 ° ver. 8. 24 These see the works of the LORD,
 ° Lev. 7. 12. And his wonders in the deep.
 Ps. 60. 14. 25 For he commandeth, and °°raiseth the stormy wind,
 & 116. 17. Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
 Heb. 13. 15. 26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the
 / Ps. 9. 11. depths:
 & 73. 28. °Their soul is melted because of trouble.
 & 118. 17. 27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
 ° Jonah 1. 4. And °are at their

¹ Heb. *singing*.² Heb. *maketh to stand*.³ Heb. *all their wisdom is swallowed up*.

the general theme. But it is most in accordance with what seems the design of the Psalm to suppose that ordinary sharp suffering of man in bondage, through sin, is chiefly portrayed: such as that of Jehoahaz (2 K. xxiii. 33, 34) in Egypt.

11. "They rebelled against the words of God" declared in His Law or by His Prophets, "and contemned the counsel" or purpose of God to punish sin sooner or later.

17-19. The sick to death, whose sickness is owing to folly and has been sent by God, cry to Jehovah in their misery, and He rescues them from the yawning grave. By "folly" is meant want of wisdom, i.e. ignorance of God, and pravity of life which issues in ruin.

20. Or, "He sends His word, and heals them, and rescues them from their graves" (see Job xxxiii. 18, 22; Lam. iv. 20).

The Word of God is God's messenger, and runs very swiftly (cxlvii. 15), executing His commands (Isai. lv. 11), abiding with His Prophets (Isai. ix. 8), telling to every man his work (cv. 19); and often, as here, a Physician sent to heal the sick in body and spirit. Such passages, and others like them (Zech. ix. 1 &c.), prepare us for the doctrine that the Word of God, whereby the heavens were made (xxxiii. 6), expresses not simply a power or energy, but a Personal existence (John i. 1-5.)

24. *the works* &c.] Not simply God's miracles of Creation, but His "tempests" and "miracles of deliverance." The description in this Psalm of the sea, its terrors and occupations, could hardly have been written before the reign of Solomon.

27. *are at their wits' end*] See the margin, i.e. "all their skill is made nought."

- 28 ¹Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses. ¹ ver. 6.
- 29 ²He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still. ² Ps. 89. 9.
- 30 Then are they glad because they be quiet;
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
- 31 ¹Oh that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men! ¹ ver. 8.
- 32 Let them exalt him also ²in the congregation of the people,
And praise him in the assembly of the elders. ² Ps. 22. 22,
25.
& 111. 1.
- 33 He ³turneth rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;
³ 1 K. 17. 1,7.
- 34 A ⁴fruitful land into ¹barrenness,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein. ⁴ Gen. 13. 10.
& 14. 3.
& 19. 25.
- 35 ²He turneth the wilderness into a standing water,
And dry ground into watersprings. ² Ps. 114. 8.
- 36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
That they may prepare a city for habitation;
- 37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,
Which may yield fruits of increase.
- 38 ³He blesseth them also, so that they ⁴are multiplied greatly;
And suffereth not their cattle to decrease. ³ Gen. 12. 2.
& 17. 16.
⁴ Ex. 1. 7.
- 39 Again, they are ⁵minished and brought low
Through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. ⁵ 2 K. 10. 32.
- 40 ⁶He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in the ²wilderness, *where there is*
no way. ⁶ Job 12. 21,
24.
- 41 ⁷Yet setteth he the poor on high ³from affliction,
And ²maketh *him* families like a flock. ⁷ 1 Sam. 2. 8.
Ps. 113. 7.
- 42 ⁸The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice:
And all ²iniquity shall stop her mouth. ⁸ Ps. 78. 52.
⁹ Job 22. 19.
Ps. 52. 6.
& 58. 10.
- 43 ⁹Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*,
Even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD. ⁹ Job 5. 16.
Ps. 63. 11.
Rom. 3. 19.
¹⁰ Ps. 64. 9.
Jer. 9. 12.

PSALM CVIII.

A Song or Psalm of David.

- 1 O ¹GOD, my heart is fixed;
I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. ¹ Ps. 57. 7.
- 2 ²Awake, psaltery and harp:—I *myself* will awake early. ² Ps. 57. 8—
- 3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people:
And I will sing praises unto thee among the nations. 11.

¹ Heb. *saltiness*.² Or, *void place*.³ Or, *after*.

30. *because they*] i.e. "the waves" are quiet and calm (see Jonah i. 11).

This Psalm may, in a sense, be regarded as prophetic. Christ rescues from a captivity sterner than that of Babylon: points the way in a wilderness more horrid than that of Sinai: and saves from sickness and death those who cry to Him with faith. He saved His followers from a furious tempest (Matt. viii. 26) and shewed Himself indeed the Lord of nature.

35 &c.] The words of Job (cp. v. 40, marg. ref.) and of Isaiah (specially xli. 18) seem to be introduced bodily into the Psalm, to show how the fortunes of men, and of the

chosen people, continually illustrated their sayings. It would also seem from the concluding words (v. 43, cp. Hos. xiv. 9), that the allusions in the Psalm, and the facts referred to, were well known to those who sang it and heard it first. Would that we could know them as they did! Every man, from his own experience, can supply similar examples of hopeless peril and of miraculous escape.

CVIII. This Psalm is constructed out of two Psalms commonly reputed Davidical. Cp. vv. 1-5 with lviii. 7, &c.; and vv. 6-13 with lx. 5-12. It is not likely that David united two incongruous parts of his own

- 4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens:
And thy truth *reacheth* unto the ¹clouds.
- ε Ps. 57. 5. 5 'Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens:
11. And thy glory above all the earth;
- α Ps. 60. 5, &c. 6 ^dThat thy beloved may be delivered:
Save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.
- 7 God hath spoken in his holiness;
I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem,
And mete out the valley of Succoth.
- 8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine;
Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head;
- ε Gen. 40. 10. 9 'Judah *is* my lawgiver; Moab *is* my washpot;
Over Edom will I cast out my shoe;
Over Philistia will I triumph.
- ι Ps. 60. 9. 10 ^fWho will bring me into the strong city?
Who will lead me into Edom?
11 Wilt not thou, O God, *who* hast cast us off?
And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?
12 Give us help from trouble:—for vain *is* the help of man.
- ψ Ps. 60. 12. 13 ^gThrough God we shall do valiantly:
For he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM CIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- α Ps. 83. 1. 1 HOLD ^anot thy peace, O God of my praise;
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the ²mouth of the deceitful
³are opened against me;
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred;
And fought against me ^bwithout a cause.
- β Ps. 35. 7, & 69. 4. 4 For my love they are my adversaries:
John 15. 25. But I *give myself* unto prayer.

¹ Or, *skies*.² Heb. *mouth of deceit*.³ Heb. *have opened themselves*.

compositions. The variations, generally, of phrase between this Psalm and the Psalms from which it is composed are unimportant. Pss. lvii. and lx. are both Elohistic: in v. 3 of this Psalm Jehovah is substituted for Adonai.

Some regard this Psalm as a morning hymn (see v. 2); others as a rejoicing over the morning, so to say, of restoration from Captivity. See notes to Pss. lvii. and lx.

CIX. David was a man of forgiving spirit: only here, and it may be in Pss. xxxv., lviii. 10, lxix., does he shew a spirit of entreaty for God's vengeance upon His foes, which is considered by some alien to the tenor of the Psalms. But is a *Christian* spirit to be expected in the Psalms? Would even the words of Christ (Matt. v. 43 &c.) have been uttered, if the spirit which animated the Jewish people had been always that which He came to inculcate? These words of the Psalmist may express the wish that God's providential government of His people should be asserted in the chastisement of the enemy of God and man. For it may be

assumed either that the enemy spoken of is not simply an enemy of David, but a liar, murderer, slanderer, such as Doeg, Ahithophel, Shimei, &c., of whose guiltiness there could be no doubt: or, that the Psalmist does not in fact speak specially of one but of many collectively, and of their sin as abstracted from that of any individual. It is further to be observed that in these Psalms there is evidence not only of the meekness but of the persevering love of the sufferer (see v. 4, xxxv. 13, lxix. 4, 10).

The inscriptions refer Pss. cviii., cix., cx., to David; and St. Peter (Acts i. 20) quotes this Psalm as of David.

1. *Hold not thy peace*] i.e. "Be not silent and (as it were) indifferent to the haughty words and wicked deeds of my foes."

2. Or, *a wicked mouth and a deceitful mouth have they opened against me* &c. The circumstances under which the Psalmist pleads for succour are that—wicked men have spoken, and ~~and~~ speak, lies and slander.

4. *But I give myself unto prayer*] Lit. Heb. "but I (am) prayer," i.e. "nought but prayer" (cp. cxx. 7). The mixture of tenses

- 5 And ^cthey have rewarded me evil for good,
And hatred for my love. ^c Ps. 35. 7, 12.
& 38. 20.
- 6 Set thou a wicked man over him:
And let ^{d1}Satan stand at his right hand. ^d Zech. 3. 1.
- 7 When he shall be judged, let him ²be condemned:
And ^elet his prayer become sin. ^e Prov. 28. 9.
- 8 Let his days be few;—and ^flet another take his ³office. ^f Acts 1. 20.
- 9 ^gLet his children be fatherless,—and his wife a widow. ^g Ex. 22. 24.
- 10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg:
Let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.
- 11 ^hLet the extortioner catch all that he hath;
And let the strangers spoil his labour. ^h Job 5. 5.
& 18. 9.
- 12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him:
Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.
- 13 ⁱLet his posterity be cut off;
And in the generation following let their ^kname be blotted out. ⁱ Job 18. 19.
Ps. 37. 28.
- 14 ^lLet the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD;
And let not the sin of his mother ^mbe blotted out. ^k Prov. 10. 7.
^l Ex. 20. 5.
^m Neh. 4. 5.
Jer. 18. 23.
- 15 Let them be before the LORD continually,
That he may ⁿcut off the memory of them from the earth. ⁿ Job 18. 17.
Ps. 34. 16.
- 16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
That he might even slay the ^obroken in heart. ^o Ps. 34. 18.
- 17 ^pAs he loved cursing, so let it come unto him:
As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. ^p Prov. 14. 14.
Ezek. 35. 6.
- 18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment,
So let it ^qcome ⁴into his bowels like water, and like oil into his ^rbones. ^q Num. 5. 22.
- ¹ Or, an adversary. ² Heb. go out guilty, or, wicked. ³ Or, charge.
⁴ Heb. within him.

may be significant in these early verses. The hatred of the Psalmist's foes is not of to-day or of yesterday, but of old and of years past.

6. *Set thou a wicked man &c.*] i.e. To judge him (v. 7) according to his wickedness. In Lev. xxvi. 16, consumption, fever, and a burning ague, are "set over" the disobedient people, like savage rulers or taskmasters, to vex them.

No passion is discernible in these dreadful imprecations. Rather a calm tranquil spirit, as if the chastisement (vv. 7-20) were plainly deserved, and would surely come. The curse was realized, though David foresaw not its realization, in the fate of Judas (cp. v. 8 marg. ref.).

Satan] Rather, as in the margin (see vv. 4, 20, 29). The phrase is taken from courts of justice; the arch-accuser (cp. marg. ref.) stands at the right hand of the accused.

7. *When he shall be judged &c.*] i.e. "When he is tried (v. 6), and judged, may he go out of the hall of judgment a criminal convicted."

10. *out of their desolate places*] i.e. Cast out and banished from their (lit. ruins) ruined homes.

11. Or, "Let the usurer lay his net upon all his property; and let barbarians and

foreigners (Deut. xxviii. 43, 44) spoil his goods, the fruit of his industry and toil." The history of the Jews, from the days of Claudian downwards, is a comment upon these words.

12. See xxxvi. 12; Neh. ix. 30, 31. Let no one, his baseness ascertained, lengthen out to him kindness begun.

15. *Let them be &c.*] Let the sins of father, mother, forefathers, be present to the memory of God, so that He may think of them always, and cut off the remembrance of the whole race before Him.

16. *But persecuted &c.*] More lit. "but persecuted the poor and needy man, yea, the broken-hearted man, and that to put him to death." This verse had its most signal fulfilment when the people arose and constrained Pilate to crucify the "Man of sorrows." The people that then condemned Him were cut off in the next generation,—forty years after the Crucifixion the destruction came,—their house was left desolate, their Temple destroyed, and the residue became wanderers and beggars over the whole earth (Matt. xxiii. 32-36, xxvii. 25).

18. *let it come &c.*] Cursing permeated his inmost parts as water, as the refreshing oil with which the body is anointed finds a way into marrow and bones. The images

- 19 Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covereth him,
And for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
- 20 Let this *be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD,
And of them that speak evil against my soul.
- 21 But do thou for me, O GOD the LORD, for thy name's sake :
Because thy mercy *is* good, deliver thou me.
- 22 For I *am* poor and needy,
And my heart is wounded within me.
- ^r Ps. 102. 11. 23 I am gone ^rlike the shadow when it declineth :
& 144. 4. I am tossed up and down as the locust.
- [•] Heb. 12. 12. 24 My [•]knees are weak through fasting ;
And my flesh faileth of fatness.
- [•] Ps. 22. 6, 7. 25 I became also [•]a reproach unto them :
[•] Matt. 27. 30. When they looked upon me [•]they shook their heads.
- [•] Job 37. 7. 26 Help me, O LORD my God :—O save me according to thy mercy :
27 [•]That they may know that this *is* thy hand ;
That thou, LORD, hast done it.
- ^v 2 Sam. 16. 11, 12. 28 ^vLet them curse, but bless thou :
[•] Isai. 65. 14. When they arise, let them be ashamed ; but let [•]thy servant rejoice.
- [•] Ps. 35. 26. 29 [•]Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,
& 132. 18. And let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.
- 30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth ;
Yea, ^bI will praise him among the multitude.
- ^b Ps. 35. 18. 31 For ^bhe shall stand at the right hand of the poor,
& 111. 1. To save *him* ¹from those that condemn his soul.
[•] Ps. 16. 8.
& 73. 23.
& 110. 5.
& 121. 5.

PSALM CX.

A Psalm of David.

- [•] Acts 2. 34. 1 THE [•]LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
1 Cor. 15. 25. Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
Heb. 1. 13.
1 Pet. 3. 22.

¹ Heb. from the judges of his soul.

in vv. 17–19 are familiar; the daily dress, the water that passes daily over every part of the body, the oil used daily for nourishment and gladness.

20. Rather, **This is the reward, or wages of mine adversaries**, which they have earned by their crimes.

21. *But do thou* &c.] Lit. "Do Thou with me," i.e. "Take part with me, and aid me, according to Thy mercy : " or, the meaning perhaps is, "Do Thou for me, according to Thy name and fame (Jer. xiv. 7), mercy and right." Cp. cxix. 65.

O God the Lord] "O Jehovah Adonai." The twofold name of God, and the pronoun "Thou" shew the intensity of the appeal.

23. i.e. "I pass away like the shadow when it lengthens and disappears. As the locust is tossed away by the wind and carried into the sea (Ex. x. 19; Joel ii. 20), so I, weak and powerless, am shaken off," &c. See Job xxxviii. 13; Neh. v. 13.

24. *fasting*] An indication of sorrow for sin, humiliation, and submission.

27. *this* i.e. "This help which I ask for

and which Thou wilt send." The Psalmist desires that God's chastisement may light upon his foes to justify His ways to man, and exhibit Him as an avenger of His friends.

28. *When they arise* &c.] Rather, "They have risen up in battle against me, and are ashamed."

CX. This Psalm has always been interpreted of Messiah in the Jewish Church. It is interpreted of Messiah by Christ Himself (Matt. xxii. 41 &c.; Mark xii. 35). In the Christian Church no ancient Scripture is more frequently quoted in proof that Christ is Messiah, and in illustration of His Offices (see marg. reff.); and many of the early Fathers so explained it.

It is impossible to read the Psalm without feeling that the persons of whom it speaks cannot be David the king or Jonathan the priest (1 Macc. x. 21) : its intense dignity and solemnity become exaggeration and bombast if interpreted of any man.

The tone, language, spirit, and contents of the Psalm bear out the almost universal

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion :
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 ^bThy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, 'in the
beauties of holiness

¹From the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy
youth.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and ^dwill not repent,
^eThou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

5 The Lord ^fat thy right hand
Shall strike through kings ^gin the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with
the dead bodies;

^hHe shall wound the heads over ⁱmany countries.

¹Or, more than the womb of the morning:
thou shalt have, &c.

² Or, great.

^b Judg. 5. 2.
^c Ps. 96. 9.

^d Num. 23.
19.
^e Heb. 5. 6.
& 6. 20.
& 7. 17, 21.
See Zech. 6.
13.
^f Ps. 16. 8.
^g Ps. 2. 5.
Rom. 2. 5.
Rev. 11. 18.
^h Ps. 68. 21.
Hab. 3. 13.

tradition that David wrote it. Most of the Messianic Psalms of David mix up Messianic circumstances with incidents of the king's own life: but Ps. ii. and his last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4) shew, that such a separation in vision, as in this Psalm, by the king was possible. Here he describes the victory of Messiah over the world of evil. The prophecy embodies certain features which suggest that the images in it are symbolical: *e.g.* the description (*v.* 4) of Messiah as Priest; of His warrior comrades, who are priests (*v.* 3 note); and the hint (*v.* 7) of His weariness and lowliness. The conflict described in the Psalm (*v.* 3 &c.) is going on always: and Messiah to this day occupies His seat as in *v.* 1.

1. The Lord said &c.] Jehovah spake in vision to the Lord of the Psalmist, and bade Him sit at His right hand.

my Lord] If David, the king and prophet, calls Christ his Lord and Master, then is He not a mere man, as the Jews maintain, but God and Lord; and David His creature and servant.

at my right hand] In the seat of chief honour, and as the associate of power. The expression is derived from the custom of a king placing his son upon the throne with him (1 K. i. 43-48).

thy footstool] An expression derived from the custom of placing the foot upon the necks of the vanquished (Josh. x. 24, 25).

2. Jehovah shall send forth out of Zion (*i.e.* Jerusalem) an irresistible force: and, as He gives the sceptre of empire, will say to Him that wields it, "Rule Thou in the midst" &c. "He gives us," says Luther, "no other mark as to the spot in which Christ is to reign, but this: *In the midst of thine enemies.*"

3. A description of the preparation for the conflict. The meaning is, "Thy people shall be willing (lit. 'willingnesses,' or 'free offerings, plural of excellence) in the day of Thy prowess: clad in robes of holiness" (2 Chr. xx. 21), as befits the ministers of a holy service (xxix. 2 note): as be-

comes the soldiers of a Priest-king. After the word "holiness" should be a full stop.

from the womb &c.] Lit. "From the womb of the morning (falls) to Thee the dew of Thy youth;" *i.e.* as the dew of early morning in multitude, and sudden, unexpected, marvellous appearance, (comes) an unnumbered troop of "Thy youthful followers." Others interpret the words: "As the dew of early morning, abundant, refreshing, spreading far and wide miraculous, is the might of Thy perpetual youth."

4. The preface to this verse, "Jehovah hath sworn," &c. and the choice of an example of the union of king and priest from a remote antiquity, and of such marked and peculiar significance, seem to shew that the union is absolutely singular. The kings of Israel did undoubtedly sometimes offer sacrifice (1 Sam. xiii. 9; 1 K. viii. 5), and bless the people (2 Sam. vi. 18). Yet the cases of Saul, Uzziah &c. (1 Sam. xiii. 12, 13; 2 Chr. xxvi. 18-20: cp. Num. xvi. 40) seem to shew conclusively, that they could not officiate as priests. Therefore the words, "Thou art a priest forever," could not apply, even in the first instance, to David. Messiah is a Priest after the image of Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 18 &c.), an inspired King, a High Priest, of the heathen, as well as of the Jews: "for ever," not, as the priests under the Law, for a brief period.

5. The Lord] Adonai, *i.e.* Jehovah. In *v.* 1, Messiah is seated at Jehovah's right hand as the Associate of His power: in this verse, by a different figure (*marg. ref.*), Jehovah is portrayed as coming down from heaven and assisting Messiah in the conflict. With this verse the address to Messiah ends: the two next (*vv.* 6, 7) are the meditations of the Psalmist upon Messiah's deeds. The transition from the address to a meditation is eminently poetical and graphic. The transitions in Ps. ii. are similar.

6. He shall fill the places &c.] *i.e.* "He shall cover the field of battle with the slain." The triumphs of Messiah are symbolized by figures taken from ordinary

- [†] Judg. 7. 5. ⁷ ¹He shall drink of the brook in the way :
^{*} Isai. 53. 12. ²Therefore shall he lift up the head.

PSALM CXI.

1 ¹PRAISE ye the LORD.

- ^a Ps. 35. 18.
[&] 89. 5.
[&] 109. 30.
[&] 140. 1.
^b Job 38—41.
^{Ps.} 92. 5.
[&] 139. 14.
^{Rev.} 15. 3.
^c Ps. 143. 5.
^d Ps. 145. 4.
^e Ps. 86. 5.
[&] 103. 8.
^f Matt. 6. 26, 33.
^g Rev. 15. 3.
^h Ps. 19. 7.
ⁱ Isai. 40. 8.
^{Matt.} 5. 18.
^k Ps. 19. 9.
^l Matt. 1. 21.
^{Luke} 1. 68.
^m Luke 1. 49.
- (^N) ^aI will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,
 (²) In the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.
 2 (²) ^bThe works of the LORD *are* great,
 (⁷) ^cSought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
 3 (⁷) His work *is* ^dhonourable and glorious :
 (⁷) And his righteousness endureth for ever.
 4 (⁷) He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered :
 (⁷) ^eThe LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
 5 (⁷) He hath given ²^fmeat unto them that fear him :
 (⁷) He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
 6 (⁷) He hath shewed his people the power of his works,
 (⁷) That he may give them the heritage of the heathen.
 7 (⁷) The works of his hands *are* ^gverity and judgment ;
 (⁷) ^hAll his commandments *are* sure.
 8 (⁷) ⁱThey ³stand fast for ever and ever,
 (⁷) ^jAnd *are* ^kdone in truth and uprightness.
 9 (⁷) ^lHe sent redemption unto his people :
 (⁷) He hath commanded his covenant for ever :
 (⁷) ^mHoly and reverend *is* his name.

¹ Heb. *Hallelujah*.² Heb. *prey*.³ Heb. *are established*.

wars ; it may be from a particular contemporary war.

⁷. *He shall drink of the brook in the way*] *i.e.* Not waiting for repose or princely refreshment ; He shall lift up His head, recruited (see Judg. xv. 18), and follow till no enemy remain. Messiah defeats His foes, and stays not for weariness till all is achieved.

Luther remarks on this Psalm that it is worthy to be set in a frame of gold and diamonds ; so full is it of excellent Christian thought and Divine instruction. The fifth verse in particular, he says, is like a rich copious spring, or inexhaustible mine, from which flow Christian instruction and wisdom, faith, hope, and confidence, the like to which no other Scripture supplies.

CXI. This Psalm consists of ten verses and twenty-two versicles ; marked in succession by the letters of the alphabet. With it begins another series of Hallelujah Psalms. Six of these Psalms, cxiii., cxiv., cxvi., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi., according to the Talmud, had a special name, and were used at the great Festivals. Pss. cxiii., cxiv., were sung in families on the night of the Passover, before the emptying of the second cup : Pss. cxv.—cxviii. after the celebration and the fourth cup. Many commentators suppose that Pss. cxl., cxli. were used as a preface to the above-named solemn hymns.

Pss. cxl. and cxli. resemble one another in construction, alphabetical arrangement, and general tone and manner. Ps. cxl. sets forth the greatness, mercy, and

righteousness of God : Ps. cxli. the reflection of these attributes in His chosen. The contents are of so general a nature that they give no clue to the author, nor to their date.

1. "The assembly" represents a smaller collection of "the upright" (*i.e.* the people of Israel) than "the congregation" ; and the meaning is, "I will praise Thee secretly and openly" (see cvii. 32 and the Prayer-Book Version).

2. *Sought out* &c.] *i.e.* "Exquisitely excellent," and "fully satisfying" all those that delight in them ; excellent, precious, incomparable, in the judgment of those who best understand them, viz. His faithful worshippers.

4. *He hath made* &c.] *i.e.* "He has done such wonderful deeds, that a remembrance of them abides for ever. The connexion between the first and second versicle is given by the Prayer-Book paraphrase.

5. The allusion is, in the first instance, to His feeding of His people in the wilderness, in the next place, to His support, always, in similar exigencies, of His faithful ones : "He gave, and gives, to them meat (marg. prey, *i.e.* taken by wild beasts)."

7. *The works* &c.] *i.e.* "All that he does, always, is justice absolute, and flows from an absolute truthfulness. All His commandments are based on His eternal truth and equity, and they stand fast" (v. 8).

9. He redeemed His people out of Egyptian bondage, and still redeems : He commanded (*i.e.* made authoritatively) a Cove-

- 10 (7) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom :
 (W) ¹A good understanding have all they ²that do *his* com-
mandments :
 (7) His praise endureth for ever.

¹ Deut. 4. 6.
 Job 28. 28.
 Prov. 1. 7.
 & 9. 10.
 Eccl. 12. 13.

PSALM CXII.

- 1 ³PRAISE ye the LORD.
 (N) "Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD,
 (2) That ^bdelighteth greatly in his commandments.
 2 (2) "His seed shall be mighty upon earth :
 (7) The generation of the upright shall be blessed.
 3 (7) "Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house :
 (7) And his righteousness endureth for ever.
 4 (7) "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness :
 (7) He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
 5 (2) "A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth :
 (7) He will guide his affairs ^cwith ^ddiscretion.
 6 (2) Surely ^ehe shall not be moved for ever :
 (7) "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
 7 (2) "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings :
 (2) His ^fheart is fixed, ^gtrusting in the LORD.
 8 (2) His heart is established, ^hhe shall not be afraid,
 (7) Until he ⁱsee *his desire* upon his enemies.
 9 (2) "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor ;
 (7) "His righteousness endureth for ever ;
 (7) "His horn shall be exalted with honour.
 10 (7) "The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved ;
 (W) "He shall gnash with his teeth, and ^jmelt away :
 (7) "The desire of the wicked shall perish.

^a Ps. 123. 1.
^b Ps. 119. 16,
 35, 47, 70.
^c Ps. 25. 13.
 & 37. 26.
 & 102. 28.
^d Matt. 6. 33.
^e Job 11. 17.
 Ps. 97. 11.
^f Ps. 37. 26.
 Luke 6. 35.
^g Eph. 5. 15.
 Col. 4. 5.
^h Ps. 15. 5.
ⁱ Prov. 10. 7.
^j Prov. 1. 33.
^k Ps. 57. 7.
^l Ps. 64. 10.
^m Prov. 1. 33.
ⁿ Ps. 59. 10.
 & 118. 7.
^o 2 Cor. 9. 9.
 Deut. 24.
 13.
^p Ps. 75. 10.
^q See Luke
 13. 28.
^r Ps. 37. 12.
^s Ps. 58. 7, 8.
^t Prov. 10.
 28.
 & 11. 7.

¹ Or, *good success*, Prov.
 3. 4.

² Heb. *that do them*.
³ Heb. *Hallelujah*.

⁴ Heb. *judgment*.

nant on Sinai with them, and keeps it for evermore. His name (i.e. Himself) is holy, and deeply to be feared.

10. *the beginning*) i.e. The principal part. In Prov. iv. 7 (see note) the word here employed is rendered "principal thing." The fear of Jehovah is the choicest wisdom : a true prudence to guide their life, have they who obey Him.

CXII. The excellence of piety and its reward (see cxi. 10) to distant generations and to a man's self and family is sung in an alphabetical hymn resembling the last.

The inscription in the Vulgate refers the Psalm to the period of the return from exile.

2. A blessing of the old Covenant! The seed of the righteous attains to opulence and to heroic fame, which commonly seem the reward of violence and ambition. The same phrase is used of Nimrod (Gen. x. 8) ; a similar one of Boaz (Ruth ii. 1).

3. *his righteousness* &c.] The words are probably an echo (twice repeated, see v. 9) of cxi. 3. The righteousness of God remains the same for ever : in a sense man's righteousness is a reflection of the Divine, his uprightness, justice, holiness, which are from God, remain for ever!

4. Calamity is imaged by darkness, and

escape from it by light (see Isai. ix. 1, 2, lviii. 10 ; Micah vii. 8). When a righteous man is overwhelmed in apparently hopeless calamity, a light, of which no one dreamed, suddenly arises. The words, "he is gracious" &c., are applied by some to Jehovah, by others, to the upright man. If these godlike characteristics are applied to the latter, they must be so applied with a tacit reference to Him from Whose image they are drawn (see Luke vi. 36 ; Matt. v. 45, 48).

5. *A good man* &c.] Rather, "Good is a man who sheweth favour" &c. The import is similar to that of v. 1, "Blessed," or **Happy is the man** &c.

He will guide his affairs &c.] The meaning may be, "he will conduct his affairs successfully against his enemies, and come out of the court of judgment unspotted and uninjured." The next verse continues the idea.

6. As the earth is fixed for ever (civ. 5) on its eternal bases—so this man shall never be moved. His prosperity in life and his blessing shall be an everlasting memorial of God's favour.

9. *He hath dispersed* &c.] An abundant scattering of good is intimated. See marg. ref. to the verse.

10. The wicked see that prosperity,

PSALM CXIII.

- 1 ¹PRAISE ye the LORD.
^aPs. 135. 1. ^aPraise, O ye servants of the LORD,
 Praise the name of the LORD.
^bDan. 2. 20. 2 ^bBlessed be the name of the LORD
 From this time forth and for evermore.
^cIsai. 59. 19. 3 ^cFrom the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same
 Mal. 1. 11. The LORD's name *is* to be praised.
^dPs. 97. 9. 4 The LORD *is* ^dhigh above all nations,
^e99. 2. And ^ehis glory above the heavens.
^fPs. 8. 1. 5 ^fWho *is* like unto the LORD our God,
^gPs. 89. 6. Who ²delleth on high,
^gPs. 11. 4. 6 ^gWho *exalteth himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven,
^h133. 6. and in the earth!
ⁱIsai. 57. 15. 7 ^hHe raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
^j1 Sam. 2. 8. And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;
^kPs. 107. 41. 8 That he may ⁱset *him* with princes,
^lJob 36. 7. Even with the princes of his people.
^m1 Sam. 2. 5. 9 ^kHe maketh the barren woman ³to keep house,
ⁿPs. 68. 6. And *to be* a joyful mother of children.
^oIsai. 64. 1. Praise ye the LORD.
^pGal. 4. 27.

PSALM CXIV.

- ^aEx. 13. 3. 1 WHEN ^aIsrael went out of Egypt,
^bPs. 81. 5. The house of Jacob ^bfrom a people of strange language;

¹ Heb. *Hallelujah.*² Heb. *exalteth himself to dwell.*³ Heb. *to dwell in an house.*

which they desire should pass away, increase more and more: and they with their wicked desires gnash their teeth, melt away, and perish.

CXIII. This Psalm is appointed for the service of our Church on Easter Day; probably on account of the use of it mentioned in the introduction to Ps. cxi. The date is uncertain; the conclusion (v. 9) perhaps suggested the occasion.

1. *ye servants &c.*] All faithful Israelites are intended. It is not without a reason that praise is given to Jehovah's "name"—a name associated with deeds and words, such as no other people could boast.

4. *above the heavens &c.*] Rather, "in and over" the heavens in which He dwells, which declare His glory, and in which His Angels do His bidding.

5, 6. A parallelism of phrase is noticeable in the original, which the A.V. does not preserve.

1. Who is like unto Jehovah our God?

2. Who sits throned on high;

3. Who casts looks so low;

4. In the heavens and the earth?

Some commentators refer to Deut. iii. 24, and connect the first and last of these verses, "Who is like unto Jehovah our God, in the heavens and the earth, Who sits throned on high," &c.; the heavens are His throne, and the earth His footstool (Isai. lxvi. 1).

7. Cp. the Song of Hannah (marg. ref.) and the Song of Mary (Luke i. 46 &c.).

8. *with the princes of his people*] Not only as equal with the princes of the earth, but with the princes of His people, the chosen of God.

9. A "house," to the Hebrew mind, implies children: without which it is cheerless, and without which the wife has no secure place. This verse is taken by some to be the point of the Psalm, and the occasion of its composition.

CXIV. A Psalm recounting God's miracles in separating His chosen people, and leading them out of Egypt into Canaan.

The date and author of this Psalm are unknown. It is marked by characteristic brevity, force, rapidity, intense faith, personification of natural objects, and by choice of a subject, the miracles of Exodus exclusively, which suggest a very early date.

These miracles of Exodus are frequently referred to by Psalmist and Prophet. It is hard to imagine any hypothesis, except the truth of the grand events alluded to, which could have led to such an echo of them throughout all generations of Jews.

1. "Israel," and "the house of Jacob," in this verse are put naturally for the people: "Judah" and "Israel" in v. 2, seem put for places; the first for the place in which Jehovah abode (Ex. xv. 17), the second for the kingdom in which He reigned.

strange language] The sign of a barbarous, unholy people, contrasted with the holy, separated people.

2 ^c Judah was his sanctuary,—and Israel his dominion.

3 ^d The sea saw *it*, and fled :

^e Jordan was driven back.

4 ^f The mountains skipped like rams,
And the little hills like lambs.

5 ^g What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest ?

Thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back ?

6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams ;
And ye little hills, like lambs ?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob ;

8 ^h Which turned the rock *into* a standing water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM CXV.

1 NOT ^a unto us, O LORD, not unto us,

But unto thy name give glory,

For thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say,

^b Where *is* now their God ?

3 ^c But our God *is* in the heavens :

He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 ^d Their idols *are* silver and gold,—the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not :

Eyes have they, but they see not :

6 They have ears, but they hear not :

Noses have they, but they smell not :

7 They have hands, but they handle not :

Feet have they, but they walk not :

^c Ex. 6. 7.

& 25. 8.

& 29. 45, 46.

Deut. 27. 9.

^d Ex. 14. 21.

Ps. 77. 16.

^e Josh. 3. 13,

16.

^f Ps. 29. 6.

& 68. 16.

Hab. 3. 6.

^g Hab. 3. 8.

^h Ex. 17. 6.

Num. 20. 11.

Ps. 107. 35.

^a See Isai.

48. 11.

Ezek. 36. 32.

^b Ps. 42. 3,

10.

& 79. 10.

Joel 2. 17.

^c 1 Chr. 16.

26.

Ps. 135. 6.

Dan. 4. 35.

^d Deut. 4. 28.

Ps. 135. 15.

Jer. 10. 3.

2. *his dominion*] Heb. "His kingdoms," as if He had none other. The idea here prominent, that God, by His miracles in Exodus, purchased for Himself an inheritance, is common in Scripture (Ex. xix. 4. 5, 6; Deut. iv. 20; 1 K. viii. 51), and a frequent topic with which the Prophets commence their exhortations.

3. The Red Sea and the river Jordan are described as foes that fled at the Presence of a mightier foe. The Hebrew leaves it to be understood Whom the sea saw (civ. 7). The passage of the Red Sea and the crossing of Jordan are specified as the beginning and end of the miraculous transit. Between them (v. 4) are the miracles which accompanied the giving of the Law (Ex. xix. 18).

5. Cp. similar addresses in lxviii. 16; Isai. xliii. 7. The Psalmist sees the miracles which he recounts, and draws the conclusion, which is the crowning point of the Psalm, that earth and all within it, had cause for trembling and quaking at His Presence, Who made the world and did these wonders, and can do them still for His chosen.

8. *Which turned &c.*] The "rock" was the rock of Horeb; the "flint" was the "rock" of Kadesh (cp. marg. ref.).

CXV. A characteristic of this Psalm is a
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frequent allusion to, or quotation of, Isaiah. It may have been written somewhat late in Jewish history (see v. 4), and in a time of perplexity and peril. The purport of it is, confidence in God (vv. 1-3); contempt of all other gods (vv. 4-8); exhortation to trust and hope (vv. 9-11), from a recollection of the past (vv. 12-15), and from general thoughts of His doings for man (vv. 16-18).

The iterations (vv. 9-13) suggest the idea of a Psalm for Temple service. It would suit an occasion of thanksgiving, as well as of trial: the tone of the early verses is joyous rather than sad.

1. Confession is made of unworthiness to obtain favour. This can only flow out of God's mere grace, and from the recollection of His name and fame as a God of deliverances.

3. The answer to the question in v. 2. Our God is in Heaven, not as vain idols, close to us, on earth.

4. The impotence of idols compared with the living God is a frequent topic with the later Prophets. These reiterated comparisons were pointed and necessary in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah; when the whole world, except a small corner of it, was given over to idolatry.

7. *Neither speak they*] Or, "mutter any

- Neither speak they through their throat.
 * Ps. 135. 18. 8 ^cThey that make them are like unto them,
 Jonah 2. 8. So is every one that trusteth in them.
 Hab. 2. 18. 9 ^fO Israel, trust thou in the LORD:
 See Ps. ^gHe is their help and their shield.
 118. 2, 3, 4. 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD:
 * Ps. 33. 20. He is their help and their shield.
 Prov. 30. 5. 11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD:
 He is their help and their shield.
 12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless *us*;
 He will bless the house of Israel;
 He will bless the house of Aaron.
 * Ps. 128. 1, 4. 13 ^hHe will bless them that fear the LORD,
 Both small ⁱand great.
 14 The LORD shall increase you more and more,
 You and your children.
 * Gen. 14. 19. 15 Ye *are* ⁱblessed of the LORD
 * Gen. 1. 1. ^kWhich made heaven and earth.
 Ps. 96. 5. 16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's:
 But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
 * Ps. 6. 5. 17 ^lThe dead praise not the LORD,
 & 88. 10, Neither any that go down into silence.
 11, 12. 18 ^mBut we will bless the LORD
 Isai. 38. 18. From this time forth and for evermore.
 * Ps. 113. 2. Praise the LORD.
 Dan. 2. 20.

PSALM CXVI.

- * Ps. 18. 1. 1 I ^aLOVE the LORD, because he hath heard
 My voice *and* my supplications.
 2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
 Therefore will I call upon *him* ²as long as I live.

¹ Heb. *with*.² Heb. *in my days*.

sound." Cp. Isai. xxxviii. 14. The "throat" is taken as the organ of speech.

8. They are nought, powerless and senseless (marg. refl. and Isai. xlv. 9, 10).

9-11. The order of the original in this burden of the song is expressive. "Our help and our shield" &c. was rather to be expected: but the burden, thrice introduced, appears to be a well-known formula of praise: *their*, i.e. "the help of all who trust in Him." The verses contain a climax: (1) Israel in general is addressed; (2) the priests or ministers of God's service; (3) the true Israelites, those who serve God in sincerity of heart. Cp. cxxxv. 19, 20, where the house of Levi is distinguished from that of Aaron.

14. According to His promise (Deut. i. 11). Some interpret, "shall add blessings to you and your children."

16. Heb. "The heavens (are) heavens (i.e. a dwelling-place) for the Lord" &c. (cp. Acts xvii. 24). It may be that the mention of two dwelling-places (heaven and earth) suggests (*v.* 17) the mention of a third, the land of silence, darkness, and death-shade, in which the dead cannot praise Him as

they do, and will, who are all but in His glorious Presence.

17. This verse and the passages named in the marg. refl. simply indicate an ignorance of the state of the soul after death; they cannot be employed, with any appearance of reason, to prove a belief on the part of the Psalmist or of Hezekiah in future extinction of being.

CXVI. A Psalm of thanksgiving of an Israelite for deliverance out of imminent peril, interspersed with repeated promises of vows and offerings to be paid in public to his Deliverer: at what time composed, or in recollection of what critical trial, is uncertain. The Aramaisms in the Psalm, and imitations of Davidic Psalms (*e.g.* xviii), point to a late date. A portion of it is used in the Church of England for the service of the Churching of Women. In the LXX. and Vulg. the Psalm is divided at the end of *v.* 9, and forms two Psalms, which in those translations are numbered cxiv. and cxv., each beginning with Hallelujah.

A Jewish tradition refers the Psalm to Hezekiah: many resemblances are noticed between it and Isai. xxxvii. and xxxviii.

- 3 ^bThe sorrows of death compassed me,
And the pains of hell ^gat hold upon me:
I found trouble and sorrow.
- 4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD;
O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
- 5 ^cGracious *is* the LORD, and ^drighteous;
Yea, our God *is* merciful.
- 6 The LORD preserveth the simple:
I was brought low, and he helped me.
- 7 Return unto thy ^erest, O my soul;
For ^fthe LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
- 8 ^gFor thou hast delivered my soul from death,
Mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
- 9 I will walk before the LORD—^hin the land of the living.
- 10 ⁱI believed, therefore have I spoken:
I was greatly afflicted:
- 11 ^kI said in my haste,—All men *are* liars.
- 12 What shall I render unto the LORD
For all his benefits toward me?
- 13 I will take the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.
- 14 ^mI will pay my vows unto the LORD now
In the presence of all his people.
- 15 ⁿPrecious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of his saints.
- 16 O LORD, truly ^oI *am* thy servant;
I *am* thy servant, and ^pthe son of thine handmaid.
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
- 17 I will offer to thee ^qthe sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.
- 18 ^rI will pay my vows unto the LORD now
In the presence of all his people,
- 19 In the ^scourts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Praise ye the LORD.

^b Ps. 18. 4,
5, 6.

^c Ps. 103. 8.
^d Ezra 9. 15.
Neh. 9. 8.
Ps. 119. 137,
& 145. 17.

^e Jer. 6. 16.
Matt. 11. 29.
^f Ps. 13. 6.
& 119. 17.
^g Ps. 56. 13.

^h Ps. 27. 13.
ⁱ 2 Cor. 4. 13.

^k Ps. 31. 22.
^l Rom. 3. 4.

^m ver. 18.
Ps. 22. 25.
Jonah 2. 9.
ⁿ Ps. 72. 14.

^o Ps. 119. 125.
& 143. 12.
^p Ps. 86. 16.

^q Lev. 7. 12.
Ps. 50. 14.
& 107. 22.
^r ver. 14.

^s Ps. 96. 8.
& 100. 4.
& 135. 2.

¹ Heb. *found me.*

3. Lit. "The cords (see v. 16) of death encircled me; the straits of hell laid hold of me or caught me."

6. *the simple*] Who are as children without guile, and open to assault.

7. *rest*] That rest, the opposite of death and hell (v. 3), which flows from trust in God.

10. The meaning is obscure. The Psalmist speaks what he had long time believed; the general import being: "God is faithful, man faithless; this I believe, and said, and say."
liars] The meaning may be "hypocrites," friendly in prosperity, but apt to desert in trouble.

13. *the cup of salvation*] Lit. "The cup of deliverances." Below (vv. 7, 18) a thank-offering is plainly mentioned, and a vow to be performed openly. Hence, some think that a feast followed such thank-offering, and that a cup, here called a cup of "deliverances," was passed round the guests

after such feast, to which allusion is made here. On the great Feast of the Passover, after the Feast a cup of thanksgiving was passed round (Matt. xxvi. 27): but no Old Testament Scripture refers plainly to any such general custom as that supposed. Hence, others consider the word used figuratively (as in xi. 6, xvi. 5, xxiii. 5), and the meaning to be, "I will receive and enjoy the 'lot of salvation,' or the 'prosperous joyous lot' which God has given."

15. Babylas, Bishop of Antioch, in the Decian persecution, advanced cheerfully to death, singing these words. The Apostolical Constitutions recommend this verse, among others, to be sung at the funeral of the faithful.

16. These words seem to commence the formal thanksgiving of the worshipper.
my bonds] He speaks as if bound to the Altar of sacrifice or with ref. to v. 3.

PSALM CXVII.

- ^a Rom. 15.
11. 1 O ^aPRAISE the LORD, all ye nations:
Praise him, all ye people.
- ^b Ps. 100. 5. 2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us:
And ^bthe truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever.
Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXVIII.

- ^a 1 Chr. 16.
8, 34. 1 O ^aGIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*:
Because his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- Ps. 106. 1. 2 ^bLet Israel now say,—that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- & 107. 1. 3 Let the house of Aaron now say,
& 136. 1. That his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ^b See Ps. 115. 9, &c. 4 Let them now that fear the LORD say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever,
- ^c Ps. 120. 1. 5 ^cI called upon the LORD ¹in distress:
^d Ps. 18. 19. The LORD answered me, and ^dset me in a large place.
- ^e Ps. 27. 1. 6 ^eThe LORD is ²on my side; I will not fear:
& 56. 4, 11. What can man do unto me?
& 146. 5.
Isai. 51. 12.
Heb. 13. 6.

¹ Heb. *out of distress*.² Heb. *for me*.

CXVII. The brevity of this Psalm has suggested to some that it was used liturgically as a formula of dismissal of worshippers after service. Others think it to be an introduction to a longer Psalm. It is joined to Ps. cxviii. in several MSS. On the other hand, though brief, it expresses the essence of all Messianic Psalms. It resembles Ps. c. in many respects.

St. Paul (see marg. ref.) develops the idea which is the germ of the Psalm.

CXVIII. This Psalm is the last of the group of Psalms (cxiii.-cxviii) which constituted the Hallel sung upon the chief Festivals.

It is difficult, in any translation, to convey an idea of the reality, fire, and intensity of faith, which this Psalm expresses.

The application of the Psalm has been referred to David, or to Hezekiah: but the most common view is that the Psalm was composed soon after the return from exile, in celebration either (1) of the Feast of Tabernacles (Ezra iii. 1-4); or (2) the laying of the foundation-stone of the Temple (do. iii. 8-13); or (3) the dedication of the Temple (do. vi. 15-18); or (4) a later Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. viii. 14). According to any one of these suppositions it is not a chief or leader that details his trials and escapes in vv. 5-18, but the people of God.

Even if vv. 17, 18, seem scarcely with propriety to be applicable to a people, yet one or two verses (23, 27) fall in easily with this hypothesis; and passages in Isaiah (e.g. ch. xlii), and Jeremiah (Lam. i. 12 &c.) are parallel to it on the supposition that they describe the people of God under the image of His servant, acting, suffering, or praying, as the case may be.

Well-known phrases (vv. 1, 29 and 2-4);

the recurrence of *burdens*; (vv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, &c.); the mention of the singers (vv. 2, 3, 4); the many phrases borrowed from other Scriptures, and the allusions (vv. 24 seq.) to a Festival and its accompaniments, indicate a Psalm, sung by two or more choruses, and adapted to the Temple-service generally rather than to a single special occasion.

The marg. ref. to v. 26 shew that the Psalm was commonly referred to Messiah in the days of our Lord. Many Rabbins, ancient and modern, interpret the Psalm of Messiah: and Christians believe that it obtains full significance only in Him. In this sense the Psalm is Messianic; and other Psalms may be instanced in which the voice of the people is consciously or unconsciously the voice of Messiah the Prince. David may have written the first germ of the Psalm; Hezekiah may have used it on his recovery from mortal sickness, or on his deliverance from peril of the Assyrians. Other additions may have been made in after times to suit occasions which emerged: and a Psalm written in the first instance to thank God for mercies shewn to one pre-eminent among his people, may have been used for occasions in which the people, or a chorus for it, speaks and sings.

1. These words were sung by the Levites at the time of laying the foundation-stone of the second Temple (Ezra iii. 11), but they are a common formula of thanksgiving.

2-4. In all probability these verses contain a sort of climax: (1) Israel in general, (2) the house of Aaron, (3) the true Israel (cp. cxv. 9-11 note).

5. *set me in a large place* i.e. He answered me, and brought me into a wide open space, in which I could breathe freely.

- 7 ^f The LORD taketh my part with them that help me :
Therefore shall ^g I see *my desire* upon them that hate me. ^f Ps. 54. 4.
^g Ps. 59. 10.
- 8 ^h *It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man. ^h Ps. 40. 4.
& 62. 8, 9.
Jer. 17. 5, 7.
ⁱ Ps. 146. 3.
- 9 ⁱ *It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in princes.
- 10 All nations compassed me about :
But in the name of the LORD will I ¹ destroy them.
- 11 They ^k compassed me about ; yea, they compassed me about :
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them. ^k Ps. 88. 17.
- 12 They compassed me about ^l like bees ;
They are quenched ^m as the fire of thorns :
For in the name of the LORD I will ² destroy them. ^l Deut. 1. 44.
^m Eccl. 7. 6.
Nah. 1. 10.
- 13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall :
But the LORD helped me.
- 14 ⁿ The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And is become my salvation. ⁿ Ex. 15. 2.
Isai. 12. 2.
- 15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the
righteous :
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
- 16 ^o The right hand of the LORD is exalted :
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. ^o Ex. 15. 6.
- 17 ^p I shall not die, but live,—and ^q declare the works of the
LORD. ^p Ps. 6. 5.
Hab. 1. 12.
^q Ps. 73. 28.
^r 2 Cor. 6. 9.
- 18 The LORD hath ^r chastened me sore :
But he hath not given me over unto death.
- 19 ^s Open to me the gates of righteousness :
I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD : ^s Isai. 26. 2.
- 20 ^t This gate of the LORD,
“Into which the righteous shall enter.” ^t Ps. 24. 7.
^u Isai. 35. 8.
Rev. 21. 27.
& 22. 14, 15.

¹ Heb. cut them off.² Heb. cut down.

7. Rather, “Jehovah is on my side with them that help me;” not as if Jehovah were one of many helpers, but among helpers to help them.

9. These words were said, in all probability, in the midst of extremest peril, or after an almost miraculous escape, through Jehovah, Omnipotent Helper.

10. Lit. “In the name of Jehovah it is certain that I shall destroy them.” “All nations” must be understood, not historically, but poetically. It has been remarked that the repetition four times of the words, “they compassed me about,” marks the pertinacious animosity of the enemies described.

12. *like bees*] i.e. With innumerable thronging numbers, and a furious desire to destroy.

They are quenched &c.] Attacking with prodigious rage, and seeming as though they would utterly destroy the devoted city, they suddenly perish, and no trace of them abides, as fire among thorns blazes up suddenly with vast heat (lviii. 9 note) and crackling, and directly dies out, leaving no trace.

13. *Thou hast thrust &c.*] The people, or prince, apostrophizes the enemy as one.

14. The signal miracles of deliverance, whatever they were, recall the miracles of old (see marg. ref., where the same words occur). “All praise” (such is the import) “be to Jehovah, from Whom, in days past, came miraculous, effectual aid, and now comes.”

17. The speaker draws a general conclusion from what goes before in reference to his own fortunes : “I shall not die, as mine enemies wish and have all but accomplished, but live and publish the miracles of Jehovah’s mercy.” This verse was hung up by Luther in his study : and was his favourite verse of a favourite Psalm.

18. God’s mercy is shewn in this : “He chastened me sore for the sake of correction and instruction, yet suffered me not to perish but saved me, to sing His praise” (cp. Isai. xxvii. 7).

19. *gates of righteousness*] Probably so called because the righteous people (c. 20) pass through them to worship. Or the meaning may be “gates which lead to His temple, Who is the well and fountain of righteousness.”

20. *This gate &c.*] Rather, “this gate (belongs to) the LORD.” “The righteous”

- ^a Ps. 116. 1.
^v ver. 14.
^s Matt. 21.
 42.
 Mark 12. 10.
 Luke 20. 17.
 Acts 4. 11.
 1 Pet. 2. 4, 7.
- 21 I will praise thee: for thou hast ^x heard me,
 And ^y art become my salvation.
- 22 'The stone *which* the builders refused
 Is become the head *stone* of the corner.
- 23 'This is the LORD's doing;
 It is marvellous in our eyes.
- 24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made;
 We will rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD:
 O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.
- ^a Matt. 21. 9.
 & 23. 39.
 Mark 11. 9.
 Luke 19. 38.
 See Zech.
 4. 7.
^b Esth. 8. 16.
 1 Pet. 2. 9.
^c Ex. 15. 2.
 Isai. 25. 1.
^d ver. 1.
- 26 ^a Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD:
 We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.
- 27 God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us ^b light:
 Bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.
- 28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee:
^c Thou *art* my God, I will exalt thee.
- 29 ^c O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good:
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

PSALM CXIX.

N ALEPH.

- 1 BLESSED *are* the ²undefiled in the way,
^a Who walk in the law of the LORD.

¹ Heb. *This is from the LORD.*

² Or, *perfect, or, sincere.*

are the Israelite people. The gate of the Israelites was upon the east side of the outer vestibule of the Temple.

22. Probably the words are proverbial. They mean either, "a people once rejected and of no account is now restored and re-established, and counted as a foundation-stone of the Temple of God, which He is setting up upon the earth," or, "a ruler or prince, once neglected and of no account, is now a victor and ruler, and, it may be, High Priest, of the chosen people." The meaning of the word "corner stone" is doubtful. Some understand the "foundation stone," upon which the building rests (Job xxxviii. 6; Jer. li. 26; Eph. ii. 20, 21); others, the "epistyle," or long block of stone resting upon the top of the columns supporting the roof (Zech. iv. 7). Such stones in Egyptian temples seem to serve the purpose of wooden beams. Isai. xxviii. 16 seems to connect this verse with the New Testament quotations of it (see marg. ref.).

23. *This &c.] i.e.* That the stone rejected is become the head stone &c.

24. *the day &c.] i.e.* The day which Jehovah has made glorious; the day on which Jehovah's gift is celebrated.

25. *Save now &c.]* The original word, *Hosannah*, or, "Save, I pray," was repeated, with the verse following, by the multitude, in their enthusiastic welcome of Messiah into His kingdom (marg. ref. to v. 26).

26. *We have blessed &c.] i.e.* "We bless you from the Sanctuary of God, out of

which comes true blessing, and into which he who is blessed is entering." This verse may probably be a liturgic formula. The festive procession possibly which sings the Psalm (vv. 5-18), in the name of the people, or which accompanies the prince victorious, enters the Temple-gates (v. 20), and sings the remaining verses of the Psalm within the Sanctuary.

27. *light] i.e.* In the wilderness by the pillar of fire (Ex. xiii. 22, xiv. 20; Neh. ix. 12). Supply "and will again shew light in darkness, or give aid in trouble."

Bind the sacrifice &c.] i.e. "Bind the victim (Ex. xxiii. 18) with cords, and lead it to the Altar," to one of the horns of which the victim was fastened.

CXIX. A hymn in praise of the Law, which is mentioned in every verse of the Psalm (except vv. 122, 132), sometimes as the Law, sometimes as God's testimonies, commandments, statutes, precepts, judgments, truth, way, righteousness &c. Eight words, at least, are employed to express God's word, or Law, or revealed truth. Some commentators define accurately the import of each of such terms: but it does not appear that they are used, in the Psalm, each in its accurate meaning, but almost indifferently one for the other. The connexion of thoughts and images is not always apparent, as might be expected in an alphabetical Psalm. It is divided into 22 equal portions according to the number of the letters of the Heb. alphabet. To each portion its own letter is prefixed,

- 2 Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies,
And that seek him with the whole heart.
 3 ^bThey also do no iniquity :
 They walk in his ways. ^b 1 John 3. 9.
 & 5. 18.
 4 Thou hast commanded *us*
 To keep thy precepts diligently.
 5 O that my ways were directed—to keep thy statutes !
 6 ^cThen shall I not be ashamed,
 When I have respect unto all thy commandments. ^c Job 22. 28.
 1 John 2. 28.
 7 ^dI will praise thee with uprightness of heart,
 When I shall have learned ¹thy righteous judgments. ^d ver. 171.
 8 I will keep thy statutes :—O forsake me not utterly.

BETH.

- 9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ?
 By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
 10 With my whole heart have I ^esought thee :
 O let me not ^fwander from thy commandments. ^e 2 Chr. 15.
 15.
^f ver. 21. 118.
 Ps. 37. 31.
 11 ^gThy word have I hid in mine heart,
 That I might not sin against thee. Luke 2. 19,
 51.
 12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD :
^hTeach me thy statutes. ^h ver. 26, 33,
 64, 68, 108,
 124, 135.
 Ps. 25. 4.

¹ Heb. *judgments of thy righteousness.*

and every verse in that portion in the original begins with the same letter. It is a reasonable supposition that this and the other alphabetical Pss. ix., xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., xxi., cxii., cxlv. were written to assist memory : and the artificial construction of this particular Psalm suggests a late date for its composition ; which also best accords with its tone and manner, its reference to proud ones, princes, and persecutors, and complaints of violence and wrong.

Some imagine the Psalm to have been written by David, before his accession to the kingdom, in exile and peril (cp. vv. 9, 23, 46, 141, 161). Others, arguing from the language and contents, imagine the Psalm to be by Daniel, or by Ezra, or of the age of Jeremiah, or by one who had passed through the discipline of the Captivity. At whatever time written, it seems written by one of signal condition, overshadowed with trials, despised, persecuted, in deepest peril, through the machinations of the enemies of God, as well as his own enemies ; and yet confident of aid through long experience of God's mercy. No other Scripture of the Old Testament is more saturated, so to say, with a spirit all but Christian, of humility, trust, devoted love to God, and realization of His near Presence, than this Psalm : it is an epitome of all true religion, and must be studied by any one who wishes to fathom the meaning of the Law, and the elevation of soul, the hope, joy, confidence felt in presence of kings and princes, by pious Jews.

ALEPH.

The blessedness of those that keep the

Law, of whom the Psalmist covets to be one.

1. "In the way," *i.e.* of life : "in the law," *i.e.* the revelation delivered on Sinai.

2. *his testimonies*] *i.e.* God's commands to do right and to shun wrong : not, as the Rabbins affirm, God's precepts in Leviticus.

3. *directed*] The original word is used, properly, of feet firmly placed in the way ; next transferred to the way itself.

4. *ashamed*] *i.e.* Disappointed of my hope which is in Thee, "when" (or, "if") I look to and note "all Thy commandments" to keep them.

5. *i.e.* "When I am fully instructed in Thy Law and in Thy judgments (which are all righteous and true) then shall I praise Thee adequately, with heart attuned to Thy service." The word rendered "judgments" means judgments by word of mouth, decrees, laws, issuing in acts (see xix. 9 ; Ex. xxi. 1).

6. *O forsake &c.*] *i.e.* "Lest of my unassisted strength, in dire extremity, I be unable to keep them."

BETH.

The security of those, especially of the young, who keep the Law.

7. A young man is mentioned (xxxiv. 11) on account of youth's temptations : some think on account of the youth of the Psalmist (see vv. 99, 100) ; but the Psalm is scarcely the utterance of youth. The second clause of the verse gives the answer to the first.

8. *i.e.* "As treasure safely stored away in secret repository, I lay by Thy word in my heart."

- [†] Ps. 34. 11. 13 With my lips have I [†]declared
All the judgments of thy mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,
As *much as* in all riches.
- [†] Ps. 1. 2. 15 I will [†]meditate in thy precepts,
ver. 23, 48, And have respect unto thy ways.
78.
[†] Ps. 1. 2. 16 I will [†]delight myself in thy statutes:
ver. 35, 47, I will not forget thy word.
70, 77.
- J GIMEL.
- [†] Ps. 116. 7. 17 [†]Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that I may live*,
And keep thy word.
18 [†]Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
Wondrous things out of thy law.
- [†] Gen. 47. 9. 19 [†]I *am* a stranger in the earth:
1 Chr. 29. 15. Hide not thy commandments from me.
Ps. 39. 12.
2 Cor. 5. 6. 20 [†]My soul breaketh for the longing
Heb. 11. 13. *That it hath* unto thy judgments at all times.
[†] Ps. 42. 1, 2. 21 Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed,
& 63. 1. Which do [†]err from thy commandments.
& 84. 2.
ver. 40, 131. 22 [†]Remove from me reproach and contempt;
[†] ver. 10, For I have kept thy testimonies.
110, 118.
[†] Ps. 39. 8. 23 Princes also did sit *and* speak against me:
[†] ver. 15. *But* thy servant did [†]meditate in thy statutes.
[†] ver. 77, 92. 24 [†]Thy testimonies also *are* my delight—and [†]my counsellors.
- T DALETH.
- [†] Ps. 44. 25. 25 [†]My soul cleaveth unto the dust:
[†] ver. 40. [†]Quicken thou me according to thy word.
Ps. 143. 11. 26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me
[†] ver. 12. [†]Teach me thy statutes.
Ps. 25. 4. 27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts:
& 27. 11. So [†]shall I talk of thy wondrous works.
& 86. 11.
[†] Ps. 146. 28 [†]My soul [†]melteth for heaviness:
5, 6. Strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
[†] Ps. 107. 26.

¹ Heb. *Reveal*.² Heb. *men of my counsel*.³ Heb. *droppeth*.

15. *thy ways*] *i.e.* "The paths of life marked out in Thy Law" (xxv. 4).

GIMEL.

17. *Deal bountifully &c.*] *i.e.* "Of Thy bountiful goodness grant to Thy servant that I may live: so shall I keep Thy Law." He prays for life, in the midst of peril (see v. 87 &c.), and promises to spend it according to God's Law.

18. *Wondrous things &c.*] Hidden, it may be, under the letter of the Law except from those whose eyes are opened by God.

19. Man is a stranger in the earth (see marg. reff.), far from his home, and ignorant of the way to please God: the word of God is his only solace and protection; and for this the Psalmist prays (v. 20) with a longing which even "breaks," or crushes his soul.

21. *i.e.* "Thou hast chastised and restrained the rebellious and impious, who are accursed (see Deut. xxvii. 26), because of Thy reproof; and do err &c."

22. *Remove*] Some render "roll away" (cp. Josh. v. 9), but the idea is rather that of removing a veil or covering (v. 18 "reveal" (marg.); Isai. xxii. 8, xlvii. 2).

23. Or, "Princes also do sit in council, and speak against me (see Ezek. xxxiii. 30; Dan. vi. 4); but Thy servant is meditating upon Thy Law."

DALETH.

25. *Quicken*] *i.e.* "Restore to vigorous life." The quickening prayed for is not of the spirit, but of the body, depressed to the lowest estate by suffering and sorrow.

26. *I have declared &c.*] *i.e.* "I have put before Thee in prayer and supplication my way of life (xxxvii. 5), its perils, temptations, endeavours, and Thou hast heard me."

28. *My soul melteth &c.*] *i.e.* "My soul, so to say, is dissolved in tears through heaviness: strengthen Thou me, or raise me up out of my fallen estate &c."

- 29 Remove from me the way of lying:
And grant me thy law graciously.
30 I have chosen the way of truth:
Thy judgments have I laid *before me*.
31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies:
O LORD, put me not to shame.
32 I will run the way of thy commandments,
When thou shalt ^aenlarge my heart.

HE.

- 33 ^bTeach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes;
And I shall keep it ^cunto the end.
34 ^dGive me understanding, and I shall keep thy law;
Yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments;
For therein do I ^edelight.
36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,
And not to ^fcovetousness.
37 ^gTurn away mine eyes from ^hbeholding vanity;
And ⁱquicken thou me in the way.
38 ^kStablish thy word unto thy servant,
Who is *devoted* to thy fear.
39 Turn away my reproach which I fear:
For thy judgments *are* good.
40 Behold, I have ^llonged after thy precepts:
^mQuicken me in thy righteousness.

VAU.

- 41 ⁿLet thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD,
Even thy salvation, according to thy word.
42 ^oSo shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me:
For I trust in thy word.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth;
For I have hoped in thy judgments.

¹ Heb. *Make to pass*² Or, *So shall I answer him**that reproacheth me in a thing.*

29. *the way of lying*] i.e. Of false religion, the opposite of "Thy Law": "grant me" as a gracious gift "Thy Law," its knowledge and practice."

31. *stuck*] The same word, in the original, as "cleave" in v. 25: "I have striven always, and do strive, to adhere stedfastly to Thy testimonies: O succour me lest I depart from them and be put to open shame."

32. A heart confined, constrained, and sad, seems contrasted, in the latter clause, with a heart free to expand, unconstrained, and joyous. It is possible, however, that enlargement of heart (see 1 K. iv. 29) may mean understanding to comprehend God's commandments thoroughly.

HE.

33. *unto the end*] i.e. "of life."

36. *covetousness*] This may have been a special temptation, at the time of the composition of the Psalm, to those who apostatized from God. See Jer. vi 13, viii. 10; Prov. i. 19.

37. *Turn away &c.*] i.e. "Make me to turn aside from aught that solicits to ungodliness in act or belief" (Isai. xxxiii. 15; Job xxxi. 26, 27).

38. *Stablish &c.*] i.e. "Confirm and realize Thy promise (of aid and support) to Thy servant who is devoted to Thy fear, i.e. to Thy reverential service:" or, "confirm &c. Thy promise which (i.e. promise) issues in Thy fear, or is accomplished in the increase of reverence for Thee" (cp. the Prayer-Book Version). A reverence or "fear" is intended which includes love.

39. *Turn away &c.*] i.e. "Guard me from the reproach which I fear of sinning against Thee" &c.

VAU.

42. The marginal rendering gives a sense more pregnant. "Answer" and "thing" (or "cause") seem corresponding phrases borrowed from courts of justice.

43. "The word of truth" is the word of experience of, or confession of, God's truth and faithfulness to promise: and the prayer

^a Isai. 60. 5.
² Cor. 6. 11.^b ver. 12.^c ver. 112.

Matt. 10. 22.

Rev. 2. 26.

^d ver. 73.

Prov. 2. 6.

Jam. 1. 6.

^e ver. 16.^f Ezek. 33.

31.

Mark 7. 21.

Luke 12. 15.

1 Tim. 6. 10.

Heb. 13. 6.

^g Isai. 33. 15.^h Prov. 23. 5.ⁱ ver. 40.^k 2 Sam. 7. 25.^l ver. 20.^m ver. 25.

37, 88, 107,

149, 156, 159.

ⁿ Ps. 106. 4.

ver. 77.

- 44 So shall I keep thy law continually
For ever and ever.
- 45 And I will walk ¹at liberty :
For I seek thy precepts.
- * Ps. 138. 1. 46 ^oI will speak of thy testimonies also before kings,
Matt. 10. 18, And will not be ashamed.
19.
Acts 26. 1, 2. 47 And I will ²delight myself in thy commandments,
² ver. 16. Which I have loved.
- 48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I
have loved ;
- * ver. 15. And I will ³meditate in thy statutes.
- ‡ ZAIN.
- 49 Remember the word unto thy servant,
Upon which thou hast caused me to ⁴hope.
- * ver. 74, 81, 147. 50 This *is* my ⁵comfort in my affliction :
* Rom. 15. 4. For thy word hath quickened me.
- * Jer. 20. 7. 51 The proud have had me greatly ⁶in derision :
* Job 23. 11. Yet have I not ⁷declined from thy law.
Ps. 44. 18. 52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD ;
ver. 157. And have comforted myself.
- * Ezra 9. 3. 53 ⁸Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked
That forsake thy law.
- 54 Thy statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
- * Ps. 63. 6. 55 ⁹I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night,
And have kept thy law.
- 56 This I had,—because I kept thy precepts.
- ¶ CHETH.
- * Ps. 16. 5. 57 ¹⁰*Thou art* my portion, O LORD :
Jer. 10. 16. I have said that I would keep thy words.
Lam. 3. 24. 58 I intreated thy ¹¹favour with *my* whole heart :
* ver. 41. Be merciful unto me ¹²according to thy word.

¹ Heb. *at large*.² Heb. *face*, Job 11. 19.

is for experimental evidence of these attributes of God, to free the heart, and unlock the tongue. The following verses describe the effects of God's favour so entreated.

45. *at liberty*] Or, as in marg. *i.e.* in a wide way, free, unconstrained, unoccupied, save by Thy service.

46. This verse seems decisively to show that the author is not a king : it would be appropriate in Ezra or Nehemiah. The verse is the motto of the Augsburg Confession of Faith.

48. *unto thy commandments* &c.] As to the Sanctuary in which God is, and out of which His power comes, in token of love and longing.

ZAIN.

49. A special word or promise is perhaps alluded to. See lvi. 8.

51. *The proud*] *i.e.* "Scoffers."

52. *judgments*] God's laws (see v. 7) righteous and true, rewarding the good, and punishing the evil, are still meant. The

recollection of them fills the mind of the Psalmist with consolation.

53. *Horror*] See xi. 6 note. Probably a burning wind, or simoom, is meant, which scorches up and destroys vegetation in a moment : and, metaphorically, in this place, a sharp, penetrating terror, or "horror."

54. *In the house of my pilgrimage*] *i.e.* In this earth, in which we are pilgrims (v. 19 ; Gen. xlvii. 9 ; 1 Chr. xxix. 15), our home being elsewhere (Eccles. xii. 5, 7).

56. *This* &c.] "This blessing or possession was (and is) mine ;" to others other blessings are assigned.

CHETH.

57. Lit. "Jehovah (is) my portion," *i.e.* "mine inheritance, more precious than any other." Jehovah was Himself the portion of the house of Levi (Josh. xiii. 33 ; Num. xviii. 20).

I have said] *i.e.* "I have determined and spoken my determination."

59 I ^bthought on my ways,

And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

^b Luke 15.
17, 18.

60 I made haste, and delayed not—to keep thy commandments.

61 The ^dbands of the wicked have robbed me :

But I have not forgotten thy law.

62 ^cAt midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee

Because of thy righteous judgments.

^c Acts 16. 25.

63 I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear thee,

And of them that keep thy precepts.

64 ^dThe earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy :

^eTeach me thy statutes.

^d Ps. 33. 5.

^e ver. 12, 26.

TETH.

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,

O LORD, according unto thy word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge :

For I have believed thy commandments.

67 ^fBefore I was afflicted I went astray :

But now have I kept thy word.

^f ver. 71.

68 Thou art ^ggood, and doest good ;—^hteach me thy statutes.

69 The proud have ⁱforged a lie against me :

But I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.

70 ^kTheir heart is as fat as grease ;—*but* I ^ldelight in thy law.

71 ^m*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted ;

That I might learn thy statutes.

72 ⁿThe law of thy mouth *is* better unto me

Than thousands of gold and silver.

Jer. 31. 18.
Heb. 12. 11.
^g Ps. 106. 1.
& 107. 1.
Matt. 19. 17.
^h ver. 12, 26.
ⁱ Job 13. 4.
Ps. 109. 2.
^k Ps. 17. 10.
Isai. 6. 10.
Acts 28. 27.
^l ver. 35.
^m ver. 67.
ⁿ ver. 127.
Ps. 19. 10.
Prov. 8. 10,
11, 19.
^o Job 10. 8.
Ps. 100. 3.
& 138. 8.
& 139. 14.
^p ver. 34, 144.
^q Ps. 34. 2.
^r ver. 49, 147.
^s Heb. 12. 10.

JOD.

73 ^tThy hands have made me and fashioned me :

^uGive me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74 ^vThey that fear thee will be glad when they see me ;

Because ^wI have hoped in thy word.

75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* ^xright,

And ^y*that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be ^zfor my comfort,

According to thy word unto thy servant.

77 ^aLet thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live :

For ^bthy law *is* my delight.

^t ver. 41.

^u ver. 24, 47,
174.

¹ Or, *companies*.

² Heb. *righteousness*.

³ Heb. *to comfort me*.

59. *I thought on my ways &c.]* i.e. "I examined the ways of my life, and do examine, and strive always to direct my steps in the way of Thy testimonies."

61. *The bands &c.]* The meaning probably is, "the **snare**s of wicked men surrounded me, but &c.;" i.e. in the midst of wicked men, each moment expecting violence and death, my hope is utterly in Thee.

TETH.

66. As the only sources of wisdom and of divine instruction, I have believed in Thy commandments.

67. *Before I was afflicted]* i.e. with chastisement.

thy word] i.e. "Thy Law."

69. *forged a lie]* The metaphor may be from sewing or patching up : or, from

smearing, or daubing, a wall, so as to hide the real substance. The Psalmist remains true to God despite the falsehoods with which the proud smear and hide His true fidelity.

70. *as fat &c.]* i.e. "Their heart is dull and brutal, so that they understand not Thy statutes."

71. Trial at the time is hard to bear (Heb. xii. 11) : but afterwards it works, through the grace of God, true knowledge.

JOD.

74. *when they see me]* i.e. When they see my hope recompensed.

75. A treasury of Christian consolation : this verse should be deeply imprinted in the memory of sufferers.

- ^a Ps. 25. 3. 78 Let the proud ^abe ashamed; ^vfor they dealt perversely with me
^v ver. 86. without a cause:
^v ver. 23. But I will ^ameditate in thy precepts.
 79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me,
 And those that have known thy testimonies.
 80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes;—that I be not ashamed.

CAPH.

- ^a Ps. 73. 26. 81 "My soul fainteth for thy salvation:—*out* ^bI hope in thy word.
^a & 84. 2. 82 "Mine eyes fail for thy word,
^b ver. 74. Saying, When wilt thou comfort me?
 114. 83 For ^aI am become like a bottle in the smoke;
^c ver. 123. Yet do I not forget thy statutes.
 Ps. 69. 3. 84 "How many *are* the days of thy servant?
^d Job 30. 30. When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?
^e Ps. 39. 4. 85 "The proud have digged pits for me,
^f Rev. 6. 10. Which *are* not after thy law.
^g Ps. 35. 7. 86 All thy commandments *are* ^hfaithful:
^h ver. 27. They persecute me ⁱwrongfully; help thou me.
ⁱ Ps. 35. 19. 87 They had almost consumed me upon earth;
^j & 38. 19. But I forsook not thy precepts.
^k ver. 40. 88 ^kQuicken me after thy lovingkindness;
 So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

LAMED.

- ^l Ps. 89. 2. 89 "For ever, O LORD,—thy word is settled in heaven.
 Matt. 24. 90 Thy faithfulness *is* ^munto all generations:
 34, 35. Thou hast established the earth, and it ⁿabideth.
 1 Pet. 1. 25. 91 They continue this day according to ^mthine ordinances:
^m Jer. 33. 25. For all *are* thy servants.
ⁿ ver. 24. 92 Unless ⁿthy law *had been* my delights,
 I should then have perished in mine affliction.
 93 I will never forget thy precepts:
 For with them thou hast quickened me.
 94 I *am* thine, save me;—for I have sought thy precepts.
 95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me:
 But I will consider thy testimonies.

¹ Heb. *faithfulness*.² Heb. *to generation and generation*, Ps. 89. 1.³ Heb. *standeth*.

78. Shame and discomfiture seem the fitting recompense of the proud; who see, by the providence of God, their plans fail, and prosperity, instead of calamity, result to him whom they persecute.

79. *turn unto me*] i.e. "Turn to me and to fellowship with me" (Jer. xv. 19; Prov. ix. 4).

80. *sound*] i.e. "Perfect," or, "undivided in its allegiance" (Deut. xviii. 13).

CAPH.

81. *fainteth*] i.e. "Through eager desire for Thy salvation: but my hope is in Thy promise."

82. *fail*] As the eyes of him that watches for one that cometh not, fail with watching.

83. *like a bottle &c.*] i.e. "As a wine-skin in the smoke." In Asia wine is stored in

upper chambers underneath which large fires are commonly burning. The warmth communicates to it quickly, properties and excellences, which a long time only could otherwise impart.

84. *How many &c.*] i.e. "Are they so many as to admit of delay in the manifestation of Thy righteous judgments?"

85. *pits &c.*] i.e. Pits opposed to and in defiance of Thy Law (see vii. 15, ix. 15). Pits, which were dug to catch wild animals, are meant.

LAMED.

89-91. The idea is, "The word (or promise) of God is in heaven, where He is: His ordinances always rule heaven and earth: and all things serve Him." The inference is, that His word and ordinances to man are also eternal, and ever faithful.

92. A verse of inestimable price.

96 °I have seen an end of all perfection :
 °But thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

° Matt. 5. 18.
 & 24. 35.

MEM.

97 O how love I thy law !—*it is* my meditation all the day. ° Ps. 1. 2.
 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me *°* wiser than mine enemies : ° Deut. 4. 6, 8.

For *they are* ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers :

°For thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

° 2 Tim. 3.

100 °I understand more than the ancients,

Because I keep thy precepts.

15.

101 I have *°*refrained my feet from every evil way,

That I might keep thy word.

° Job 32. 7,

8, 9.

° Prov. 1. 15.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments :

For thou hast taught me.

103 °How sweet are thy words unto my *°*taste !

Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth !

° Ps. 19. 10.

Prov. 8. 11.

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding :

Therefore °I hate every false way.

° ver. 128.

NUN.

105 °Thy word *is* a *°*lamp unto my feet,

And a light unto my path.

° Prov. 6. 23.

106 °I have sworn, and I will perform *it*,

That I will keep thy righteous judgments.

° Neh. 10. 29.

107 I am afflicted very much :

°Quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

° ver. 88.

108 Accept, I beseech thee, *°*the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,

And °teach me thy judgments.

° Hos. 14. 2.

Heb. 13. 15.

° ver. 12. 26.

109 °My soul *is* continually in my hand :

Yet do I not forget thy law.

° Job 13. 14.

110 °The wicked have laid a snare for me :

Yet I *°*erred not from thy precepts.

° Ps. 140. 5.

& 141. 9.

° ver. 10. 21.

° Deut. 33. 4.

° ver. 77, 92,

174.

111 °Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever :

For *°*they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.

¹ Heb. *it is ever with me.*

² Heb. *palate.*

³ Or, *candle.*

96. *i.e.* "There is nought that is perfect, or without a limit of duration and extent; but Thy commandments are in duration infinite, and in extent correspond to man's infinite needs." Cp. Job xl. 7 &c.

MEM.

98. *for they &c.*] Lit. "it" (sing. in the Heb.; see marg.). The Commandments are considered as a whole and one.

99, 100. *i.e.* "I have more understanding than my teachers, because I am taught of Thee (see r. 102): I understand more than the ancients, *i.e.* aged men (marg. reff.), famed for wisdom of the world, because I keep Thy Law."

102. *thou hast taught me*] *i.e.* "Thou, and not man, whose teaching is vain."

103. *How sweet &c.*] Cp. xix. 10. What happiness to have such a treasure and to understand it !

104. *I get understanding*] *i.e.* to discriminate between truth and falsehood.

NUN.

105. God's word is a lamp by night : a sun by day.

108. *freewill offerings*] *i.e.* of prayer and thanksgiving, coming out of a heart devoted to God. A "freewill offering" (Deut. xxiii. 23) was paid to God in gratitude for mercies received, not in obedience to law, or as a confession of sin (see l. 14, 23).

109. *My soul &c.*] *i.e.* "Though I am always expecting and ready for death, through my enemies" &c. The image is taken from a traveller carrying precious jewels through dangerous paths : or from soldiers, who carry their lives in their hands, their lives depending upon their valour in fight.

111. *an heritage for ever*] Because far more excellent than any other.

112 I have inclined mine heart ¹to perform thy statutes
 Always, ²*even unto the end.*

¹ ver. 33.

□ SAMECH.

113 I hate *vain* thoughts:—but thy law do I love.

* Ps. 32. 7.

& 91. 1.

¹ ver. 81.

* Ps. 6. 8.

& 139. 19.

Matt. 7. 23.

114 *Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield:

¹I hope in thy word.

115 ^mDepart from me, ye evildoers:

For I will keep the commandments of my God.

116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live:

And let me not ⁿbe ashamed of my hope.

* Ps. 25. 2.

Rom. 5. 5.

& 9. 33.

& 10. 11.

* ver. 21.

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe:

And I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

118 Thou hast trodden down all them that ^eerr from thy statutes:

For their deceit *is* falsehood.

* Ezek. 22.

18.

119 Thou ²puttest away all the wicked of the earth ^p*like* dross:

Therefore I love thy testimonies.

* Hab. 3. 16.

120 ²My flesh trembleth for fear of thee;

And I am afraid of thy judgments.

Υ AIN.

121 I have done judgment and justice:

Leave me not to mine oppressors.

* Heb. 7. 22.

122 Be ^rsurety for thy servant for good:

Let not the proud oppress me.

* ver. 81, 82.

123 ^sMine eyes fail for thy salvation,

And for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy,

And ^tteach me thy statutes.

^t ver. 12.

* Ps. 116. 16.

125 ^uI *am* thy servant; give me understanding,

That I may know thy testimonies.

126 *It is time for thee*, LORD, to work:

For they have made void thy law.

* ver. 72.

Ps. 19. 10.

Prov. 8. 11.

127 ^zTherefore I love thy commandments

Above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all things to be right;

And I ^vhate every false way.

* ver. 104.

¹ Heb. *to do*.

² Heb. *caused to cease*.

SAMECH.

113. *vain thoughts* &c.] The original word, with a different punctuation, occurs in 1 K. xviii. 21, where it is rendered "opinions." Many commentators following the clue of the old Versions, render it here "doubters," "sceptics," "double-minded men" (cp. James i. 8).

118. Or, "Thou hast cast off and made of no account all those that err from Thy statutes: for their teaching, false and treacherous, is a lie; and avails nought against Thee."

119. At first the pure ore and dross are united: but in the process of refining the dross is thrown off. So is God's way with the wicked.

AIN.

122. *i.e.* "Be my surety, or defence for good," that it may be well with me.

123. *Mine eyes fail* [*i.e.* in looking for God's salvation, and for the fulfilment of the promise guaranteed by His righteousness.

125. *I am thy servant*] And therefore have claim as God's servant upon God's help.

126. Some render this verse, "It is time to work for Jehovah, &c." a rendering appropriate in a time of some great falling away from Jehovah.

127, 128. *i.e.* "Because the times are evil; because iniquity abounds: the more they tempt me with gold to leave Thy commandments, the more I love them above fine gold; and not some only, but all Thy

D PE.

- 129 Thy testimonies *are* wonderful :
Therefore doth my soul keep them.
130 The entrance of thy words giveth light ;
It giveth understanding unto the simple.
131 I opened my mouth, and panted :
For I ^alonged for thy commandments.
132 ^bLook thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,
^cAs thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.
133 ^dOrder my steps in thy word :
And ^elet not any iniquity have dominion over me.
134 ^fDeliver me from the oppression of man :
So will I keep thy precepts.
135 ^gMake thy face to shine upon thy servant ;
And ^hteach me thy statutes.
136 ⁱRivers of waters run down mine eyes,
Because they keep not thy law.

^a Ps. 19. 7.
Prov. 1. 4.
^b ver. 20.
^c Ps. 106. 4.
^d 2 Thess. 1.
6, 7.
^e Ps. 17. 5.
^f Ps. 19. 13.
Rom. 6. 12.
^g Luke 1. 74.

^h Ps. 4. 6.
ⁱ ver. 12, 26.
^j Jer. 9. 1.
& 14. 17.
See Ezek.
9. 4.

Z TZADDI.

- 137 ^kRighteous art thou, O LORD,—and upright *are* thy judgments.
138 ^lThy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded *are* ^mrighteous
And very ⁿfaithful.
139 ^oMy zeal hath ^pconsumed me,
Because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.
140 ^qThy word *is* very ^rpure :—therefore thy servant loveth it.
141 ^sI am small and despised :—yet do not I forget thy precepts.
142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness,
And thy law *is* ^tthe truth.
143 Trouble and anguish have ^utaken hold on me :
Yet thy commandments *are* ^vmy delights.

^k Ezra 9. 15.
Neh. 9. 33.
Jer. 12. 1.
Dan. 9. 7.
^l Ps. 19. 7.
8, 9.
^m Ps. 69. 9.
John 2. 17.
ⁿ Ps. 12. 6.
& 18. 30.
& 19. 8.
Prov. 30. 5.
^o ver. 151.
^p Ps. 19. 9.
John 17. 17.
^q ver. 77.

¹ Heb. according to the custom towards those, &c.

² Heb. righteousness.
³ Heb. faithfulness.
⁴ Heb. cut me off.

⁵ Heb. tried, or, refined.
⁶ Heb. found me.

precepts, however much opposed to natural will, I esteem perfect."

PE.

129. *wonderful*] i.e. "Miraculous," far exceeding aught conceived of man. On account of this incomparable excellence my soul "keeps," or rather "marks" and "meditates upon" them.

130. *The entrance* &c.] As a beam of light illumines a dark chamber, so Thy word admitted and understood illumines the soul of the simple. The LXX. and Vulg. render the word translated "entrance," "declaration;" and the idea intended is, revelation to the soul, and comprehension by it, giving understanding and wisdom.

131. A picture of eager panting appetite for the heavenly food of God's Law.

132. God's rule, of recompensing with good those who truly love Him, is meant. The prayers that follow (vv. 133, 134, 135) ask for such recompense.

133. i.e. "Order my steps in a right way, according to Thy word (v. 101), that I should not wander from it" &c.

134. He prays for deliverance from the oppression of evil men, lest by it he be tried above his power.

TZADDI.

137. It is told of the Greek Emperor Maurice in his last hours (A.D. 602), that as his five sons were successively murdered before his face, he had faith to repeat this verse. How many Christians, since his days have said the same words, in the midst of trials the same or sharper?

139. i.e. My zeal for Thy Law, which men misunderstand and misinterpret, has almost worn me out.

140. *very pure*] Or, as in the margin; "tried" as metals by fire.

141. *small*] i.e. in estimation and repute; or, "young," as the LXX., Vulg., and others render it.

142. The original words expressing "righteousness" twice in this verse are not identical. The import is, "The righteousness of God by which He acts in revelation is an ideal absolute righteousness." So again, v. 144.

- 144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting :
 2 Give me understanding, and I shall live.
- KOPH.
- 145 I cried with *my* whole heart ; hear me, O LORD :
 I will keep thy statutes.
- 146 I cried unto thee ; save me,—¹and I shall keep thy testimonies.
- 147 ¹I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried :
²I hoped in thy word.
- 148 ¹Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches,
 That I might meditate in thy word.
- 149 Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness :
 O LORD, ²quicken me according to thy judgment.
- 150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief :
 They are far from thy law.
- 151 Thou *art* ²near, O LORD ;
³And all thy commandments *are* truth.
- 152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old
 That thou hast founded them ²for ever.
- RESH.
- ⁴Iam. 5. 1. 153 ²Consider mine affliction, and deliver me :
 For I do not forget thy law.
- ⁵1 Sam. 24. 15. 154 ²Plead my cause, and deliver me :
³Quicken me according to thy word.
- Ps. 35. 1. 155 ²Salvation *is* far from the wicked :
 Mic. 7. 9. For they seek not thy statutes.
⁶ver. 40. 156 ²Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD :
⁷Job 5. 4. ³Quicken me according to thy judgments.
- ⁸ver. 149. 157 Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies ;
 Yet do I not ⁴decline from thy testimonies.
- Ps. 44. 18. 158 I beheld the transgressors, and ⁵was grieved ;
 ver. 51. Because they kept not thy word.
⁹ver. 136. 159 Consider how I love thy precepts :
 Ezek. 9. 4. ⁶Quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.
- ¹⁰ver. 88. 160 ³Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning :
 And every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

¹ Or, *that I may keep.*² Or, *Many.*³ Heb. *The beginning of thy word is true.*

KOPH.

147. *I prevented* &c.] *i.e.* "I cried unto Thee *early*, before others, and before the dawn."

148. *i.e.* "Before the watches (of the night) begin (or end), as one watch of the night ends and another begins, mine eyes make haste and wake always to meditate upon Thy word." See *vv.* 140, 159. The night in early times was divided into 3 watches, in later times into 4 (see *xc.* 4 note).

150. *They draw nigh* &c.] *i.e.* with hostile intent : but "Thou art near with ready succour" (*v.* 151).

152. *Concerning thy testimonies* &c.] *i.e.* From intimate experience of them the Psalmist knows them to be eternally precious ; and that whoever trusts in them is for ever safe.

RESH.

155. God does not force His Salvation upon any : if it be far from any one—he alone is to blame.

158. *The transgressors*] Apostates from Divine truth (see *Jer.* iii. 20, xii. 1) are meant : cp. *cxxxix.* 21.

160. Or, "The *sum* (cp. *cxxxix.* 17) of Thy word (is) truth, and every one of Thy righteous judgments (is) for ever." The sum total and each unit of the sum of God's commandments is truth and perfection. As the Psalm draws to an end, its phrases become more and more urgently supplicatory. In this section the words "quicken me" are three times repeated (*vv.* 154, 156, 159).

- 161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause :
But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.
162 I rejoice at thy word,—as one that findeth great spoil.
163 I hate and abhor lying :—*but* thy law do I love.
164 Seven times a day do I praise thee
Because of thy righteous judgments.
165 *Great peace have they which love thy law :
And ¹nothing shall offend them.
166 ¹LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation,
And done thy commandments.
167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies ;
And I love them exceedingly.
168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies :
^mFor all my ways *are* before thee.

TAU.

- 169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD :
ⁿGive me understanding according to thy word.
170 Let my supplication come before thee :
Deliver me according to thy word.
171 *My lips shall utter praise,
When thou hast taught me thy statutes.
172 My tongue shall speak of thy word :
For all thy commandments *are* righteousness.
173 Let thine hand help me ;—for ^pI have chosen thy precepts.
174 *I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD ;
And ^rthy law *is* my delight.
175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee ;
And let thy judgments help me.
176 *I have gone astray like a lost sheep ; seek thy servant ;
For I do not forget thy commandments.

PSALM CXX.

A Song of degrees.

- 1 IN ^amy distress I cried unto the LORD,—and he heard me.

¹ Heb. *they shall have no stumblingblock.*

SCHIN.

161. *But my heart &c.] i.e.* "Dreads any violation of Thy Law far above the force of Prince or Potentate."

164. *Seven times &c.]* Not only morning and evening, nor thrice only (lv. 17), but seven times, *i.e.* again and again, and many times each day so as to hallow the day, the Psalmist thanks God for His word.

166. *hoped]* Or, "waited anxiously," as did Jacob (marg. ref.).

TAU.

176. *i.e.* "I have wandered far from Thee and from home, as a sheep lost and ready to perish in a wilderness. Seek Thy servant lest he be not able of himself to seek Thee : bring him again to Thy fold, for his heart is Thine and he is longing to hear Thy voice" (see marg. reff.). As vv. 67, 110 plainly describe the spiritual inner state of the Psalmist, so this verse is supposed to refer to the outward circumstances of his life.

PSALMS OF DEGREES.

The fifteen Psalms (Pss. cxx.—cxxxiv), are called Psalms of Degrees or Psalms of Ascents. They are thought by some to have been chanted by pilgrims returning from exile at Babylon : by others to have been written at various periods for pilgrims making the periodical journeys with song and music

(Isai. xxx. 29 ; cp. Gen. xxxi. 27) to Jerusalem, commanded by the Law (Deut. xvi. 16) ; and by early tradition to have been written for chanting upon the fifteen steps which led from the Court of the women to the Court of the men in the Temple.

They were probably put into their present

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips,
And from a deceitful tongue.

3 ¹What shall be given unto thee?

Or what shall be ²done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 ³Sharp arrows of the mighty,—with coals of juniper.

^b Gen. 10. 2.
Ezek. 27. 13.
^c Gen. 25. 13.
¹ Sam. 26. 1.
Jer. 49. 26,
29.

5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in ^bMesech,

^cThat I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt—with him that hateth peace.

7 I am ⁴for peace: but when I speak,—they are for war.

PSALM CXXI.

A Song of degrees.

1 ⁵I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.

^a Ps. 124. 8.

2 ^aMy help cometh from the LORD,
Which made heaven and earth.

^b 1 Sam. 2. 9.
Prov. 3. 23,
26.

3 ^bHe will not suffer thy foot to be moved:

^cHe that keepeth thee will not slumber.

^c Ps. 127. 1.
Isai. 27. 3.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel

¹ Or, *What shall the deceitful tongue give unto thee? or, What shall it profit thee?*

² Heb. *added.*

³ Or, *It is as the sharp arrows of the mighty man, with coals of juniper.*

⁴ Or, *a man of peace.*

⁵ Or, *Shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills? whence should my help come? See Jer. 3. 23.*

form after the exile, to which—as of recent occurrence—there are many allusions. As a collection, they served like Pss. xc.-c., ci.-cviii., cxviii.-cxviii., for special occasions and uses. The following are characteristics of nearly all these Psalms: sweetness and tenderness; a sad pathetic tone; brevity; an absence generally of the ordinary parallelism; and something of a quick trochaic rhythm.

CXX. The opposition to the rebuilding of the Temple and the re-establishment of the people at Jerusalem, seems to many commentators to have given occasion to this Psalm (see Ezra iii. &c.; Neh. ii. iv. vi. &c.). But it carries on the face of it the notion of individual trial, rather than that of national distress or of a people's cry to God. The trial is like that of David (1 Sam. xxi. 7, xxii. 9 &c.), inflicted by a slanderous tongue: it is soothed by the recollection that God hears the cry of the suppliant, and answers it always.

A difference of opinion, it may be noticed, exists respecting the interpretation of almost every verse and word of this Psalm.

3, 4. These verses may be thus paraphrased, "What punishment shall be assigned to thee, shall be done or added unto thee, thou false tongue, in recompense for misery caused?"—Answer; "Sharp arrows (xlv. 5) wielded by a mighty one (see cxxvii. 4; Jer. l. 9), and burning coals of juniper" (see cxl. 10; Prov. xxv. 22). Thus the punishment of the slanderous tongue is appropriate: itself is "a sharp sword" (lvii. 4); "an arrow shot out" (Jer. ix. 8); and "is set on fire of hell" (James iii. 6). The root

of the "juniper," rather, the *retem* or broom (see 1 Kings xix. 4 note) is used for fire in the desert, and is said to retain its heat for a year.

5. Mesech (see marg. ref.) is between the Black Sea and the Caspian, Kedar is in Arabia. They stand here for remote barbarous hordes.

CXXI. Some consider that this Psalm may have been chanted by pilgrims at the first sight of the mountains of Judea, or at the conclusion of one of the periodical journeys to Jerusalem: others that the intensity of faith, and of need, which the Psalm exhibits, more naturally suggests some occasion on which an individual, suffering acute trial, appeals to God with an absolute trust in His protection.

The change of persons in vv. 1, 3, suggests the notion of two speakers: others take vv. 1, 2, to contain the half-doubting, half-confident sentiment of the Psalmist: and vv. 3-8, the assurance given to him by the Spirit of God strengthening his wavering faith. The word "keep" is repeated eight times in the last seven verses of this Psalm. In v. 7, the A.V. substitutes "preserve" for "keep."

1. *From whence &c.*] The words are a question, as in the marg. The allusion may be to Isai. lii. 7: the Psalmist turns his eyes towards the distant mountains bounding his horizon, to see if any messenger appears upon them bringing tidings of deliverance. Or, as others think, the Psalmist, in exile, turns towards the distant mountains round about Jerusalem, hoping for aid.

2. The answer to the question of v. 1.

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD *is* thy keeper :

The LORD *is* ^athy shade ^aupon thy right hand.

6 ^aThe sun shall not smite thee by day,

Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil :

He shall ^apreserve thy soul.

8 The LORD shall ^bpreserve thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth, and even for evermore.

^d Isai. 25. 4.

^e Ps. 16. 8.

& 100. 31.

^f Ps. 91. 5.

Isai. 49. 10.

Rev. 7. 16.

^g Ps. 41. 2.

& 97. 10.

& 145. 20.

^h Deut. 28. 6.

Prov. 2. 8.

& 3. 6.

PSALM CXXII.

A Song of degrees of David.

1 I WAS glad when they said unto me,

"Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand—within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is builded—as a city that is ^bcompact together :

4 ^cWhither the tribes go up,

The tribes of the LORD, unto ^athe testimony of Israel,

To give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 ^cFor there ¹are set thrones of judgment,

The thrones of the house of David.

6 ^aPray for the peace of Jerusalem :

They shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, — *and* prosperity within thy
palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes,

I will now say, Peace *be* within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God

I will ^gseek thy good.

^a Isai. 2. 3.

Zech. 8. 21.

^b See

2 Sam. 5. 9.

^c Ex. 23. 17.

Deut. 16. 16.

^d Ex. 16. 34.

^e Deut. 17. 8.

2 Chr. 19. 8.

^f Ps. 51. 18.

^g Neh. 2. 10.

¹ Heb. *do sit*.

5. "Shade," in a burning climate, is a word so naturally equivalent to defence, that it seems here to be put simply for it. Cp. the Prayer-Book Version.

6. Allusions to the fatality of the sun-stroke (2 K. iv. 18, 19), and to the noxious effect of the moon's rays.

8. *thy going out and thy coming in*] i.e. "Thy daily life" (see marg. ref.).

CXXII. The Psalm is not attributed to David by the principal Versions: the words "of" or "by David" being also omitted in some Hebrew MSS. Nor do the contents of the Psalm bespeak David as its author. The Psalmist is one of a company of pilgrims full of joy and admiration at his visit to the holy city.

Some have proposed a date after the exile for the composition of this Psalm, but no theory as to date is altogether free from objections.

2. *shall stand*] Rather, "have stood and are still standing;" i.e. "We stand, we pause, at the entrance of thy gates;"—at the scene, that is, of the memories which follow.

3. Rather, "O Jerusalem, built up, or well built, as a city compact in unity:" a de-

scription still applicable to the actual city of Jerusalem; and much more, in all likelihood, to the old city shut in close by deep ravines, rising aloft above them, and separate from all around it, compact and one.

4. If the date of the Psalm be after David and Solomon, the "tribes" must be, not the undivided tribes, but such portions of them, out of all lands, as still observed the Law of Moses (marg. ref. Cp. also Luke ii. 41, 42).

unto the testimony of Israel] Rather, a "testimony to Israel," i.e. a custom or law to Israel; the law referred to in ref. c.

5. *thrones*] Such thrones e.g. as David sat upon (2 Sam. xv. 2) and Solomon (1 K. iii. 16, vii. 7). This is a further reason why the tribes flock to Jerusalem (see Deut. xvii. 9): the capital of the nation was also, by Divine appointment, the centre of religious worship.

6. *peace*] In the sense of prosperity. In the original there is an alliteration and play upon the words "peace," "Jerusalem," "prosper."

9. *I will seek thy good*] i.e. On all these accounts, brethren, friends, the House of God, "I will strive for thy good in prayer."

PSALM CXXIII.

A Song of degrees.

- ^a Ps. 121. 1. 1 UNTO thee ^alift I up mine eyes,
^{& 141. 8.} O thou ^bthat dwellest in the heavens.
^b Ps. 2. 4. 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their
^{& 11. 4.} masters,
^{& 115. 3.} *And* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;
 So our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God,
 Until that he have mercy upon us.
 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us:
 For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
 4 Our soul is exceedingly filled
 With the scorning of those that are at ease,
And with the contempt of the proud.

PSALM CXXIV.

A Song of degrees of David.

- ^a Ps. 129. 1. 1 IF *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side,
^b Ps. 56. 1, 2. ^aNow may Israel say;
^{& 57. 3.} 2 If *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side,
^{Prov. 1. 12.} When men rose up against us:
 3 Then they had ^bswallowed us up quick,
 When their wrath was kindled against us:
 4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
 The stream had gone over our soul:
 5 Then the proud waters—had gone over our soul.
 6 Blessed *be* the LORD,
 Who hath not given us *as* a prey to their teeth.
^c Ps. 91. 3. 7 Our soul is escaped *as* a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
^{Prov. 6. 5.} The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
^d Ps. 121. 2. 8 ^aOur help *is* in the name of the LORD,
^e Gen. 1. 1. ^aWho made heaven and earth.
^f Ps. 134. 3.

CXXIII. An Israelite suffering, in common with his people, the sharpest affliction and scorn, prays to Jehovah for succour; to Whom he looks for mercy, as servants look to their lord, or a maiden to her mistress. Some suggest the circumstances narrated in Neh. ii. 19. iv. 1-5 as suitable to the composition of this Psalm; others prefer the times of persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes; others again suggest, on the grounds of similarity of language, common authorship with Ps. cxx.

2. As slaves watch the hand of master or mistress to comprehend their lightest wish, and execute it with promptitude, so suffering Israel looks to Jehovah, to discern His pleasure, to acquiesce implicitly in His will, and, at last, to obtain mercy.

3, 4. The expressions used show how the idea of suffering was continually intensified. *those that are at ease*] The word in the original is used for those that are at ease when ease is sin, or "the wanton ones" (cp. Isai. xxxii. 9, 11; Amos vi. 1); from which meaning the transition to that of "proud" and arrogant ones is easy.

CXXIV. The title ascribes the Psalm to David; but the words "of or by David" are omitted in some MSS. and by the principal Versions and Fathers. General opinion inclines to a much later author writing after David's manner. Jewish story is full of incidents (e.g. 2 K. xviii. 13; Isai. xxxvii.: Esth. ix.), of which any one might have suggested the Psalm: and life is full of circumstances which draw us to it, as the fitting expression of wonder and thankfulness for miraculous aid, in perils out of which there seemed no escape. *

3-5. "Then" is not a note of time, but an inference; "If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side, then surely" &c. *quick*] i.e. Alive, as were Korah, Dathan &c. (Num. xvi. 30, 32, 33).

the stream] i.e. A torrent swollen by sudden rains. See xviii. 4, 16, cxliv. 7; Isai. viii. 7.

5. *the proud waters*] The waters are endowed with life, and painted in the act of overwhelming us.

7. *broken*] Not by any act of man, but through the help of God. Note the image

PSALM CXXV.

A Song of degrees.

- 1 **THEY** that trust in the LORD
Shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.
- 2 *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,*
 So the LORD *is* round about his people
 From henceforth even for ever.
- 3 For "the rod of ¹the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous;
 Lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.
- 4 Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be good,*
 And to *them that are upright in their hearts.*
- 5 **As** for such as turn aside unto their ^bcrooked ways,
 The LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity :
But 'peace shall be upon Israel.

^a Prov. 23. 8.
Isai. 14. 5.^b Prov. 2. 15.^c Ps. 123. 6.
Gal. 6. 16.

PSALM CXXVI.

A Song of degrees.

- 1 **WHEN** the LORD ²turned again the captivity of Zion,
^aWe were like them that dream.
- 2 Then ^bwas our mouth filled with laughter,
 And our tongue with singing :
 Then said they among the heathen,
 The LORD ³hath done great things for them.

^a Acts 12. 9.^b Job 8. 21.¹ Heb. *wickedness.*² Heb. *returned the return-**ing of Zion*, Ps. 53. 6. &
85. 1. Hos. 6. 11. Joel³ Heb. *hath magnified to do with them.*

of a glad bird escaping, unexpectedly and against all hope, from the broken net of the fowler.

CXXV. The circumstances of this Psalm are similar to those of Psalm cxiii.

The events narrated in Neh. vi. &c. seem to many to have given occasion to the Psalm: but, generally, the incidents referred to in Neh. are tame and commonplace, when contrasted with the outburst in this Psalm of passionate energy and faith. Many words in it undoubtedly point to a late date.

1. Rather, "They that trust in Jehovah are as Mount Zion; it shall not be moved: it stands fast for ever, as the solid earth."

2. Lit. "Jerusalem, mountains are round about her; and Jehovah is round about His people" &c. Immediately round Jerusalem are hills higher than the city, but in the distance are the mountains of Moab: these are probably the "mountains" alluded to by the Psalmist.

3. The word translated "rod" means rather "sceptre" or "power" (xlv. 6; Gen. xlix. 10); the "lot of the righteous" is the land of promise portioned out to the tribes (Josh. xviii. 10). The meaning of the verse is: "The power of the oppressors, the enemies of God's people, shall not abide upon the land." The trial is to prove faith, not to endanger it by a too sharp pressure: lest, overcome by this, even the faithful should put forth a hand (cp. Gen. iii. 22) to

forbidden pleasure; or (cp. Ex. xxii. 8) to contamination: or, through force of custom gradually persuading to sinful compliance; or through despair of good, as the Psalmist (lxiii. 13, 14) describes some in his day who witnessed the prosperity of wicked men.

4. A prayer, which in v. 5 changes to a prophecy: "All that turn aside from the straight path and wander into by-paths (see Judg. v. 6), that stray from Thee and incline to Thy foes, Jehovah will destroy," "lead forth" into the ways of destruction (see lviii. 8, cix. 23; cp. Matt. vii. 22, xxiv. 51).

5. *But peace shall be upon Israel* [Omit "but." The words are not connected with what precedes. They are a separate blessing upon the true Israel (so also marg. ref.).

CXXVI. A Psalm, like Ps. lxxxv., containing thanksgiving for restoration from exile, and prayer for its full accomplishment (v. 4).

1. The meaning is: "When God turned the captivity, or changed the captivity of Zion to freedom; when the edict of Cyrus went forth allowing the captives to return, it was so unexpected, it was so miraculous (see the edict in Ezra i.), that we deemed the accomplishment of ancient prophecy (see Jer. xxv. 12, xxix. 10) a dream." But see v. 4 note.

2, 3. *the LORD hath done &c.* [The words

- 3 The LORD hath done great things for us;—*whereof* we are glad.
 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD,—as the streams in the south.
 5 ^cThey that sow in tears—shall reap in ¹joy.
 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing ²precious seed,
 Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves
 with him.

^c See Jer.
31. 9, &c.

PSALM CXXVII.

A Song of degrees ³for Solomon.

- 1 EXCEPT the LORD build the house,
 They labour in vain ⁴that build it:
 Except ^athe LORD keep the city,
 The watchman waketh *but* in vain.
 2 *It is vain* for you to rise up early, to sit up late,
 To ^beat the bread of sorrows:
 For so he giveth his beloved sleep.

^a Ps. 121. 3,
4, 5.

^b Gen. 3. 17,
19.

¹ Or, *singing*.
² Or, *seed basket*.

³ Or, *of Solomon*, Ps. 72,
title.

⁴ Heb. *that are builders of it in it*.

of Joel ii. 21 are repeated twice, to call attention to the fulfilment of ancient prophecy.

4. A prayer: as the streams in **the dry land** (the Negeb, see Josh. xv. 19 note) are restored in the rainy season, fill the beds of ancient watercourses, and renew life and movement where silence and desolation were before; so, says the Psalmist, "turn our captivity," or, "restore the residue," to fill our streets and cities with inhabitants, and convert a wilderness into a peopled land. Others consider the point of comparison to be the idea of gratefulness and welcomeness, as of restored waters, so of returning peoples. Many commentators, however, translate *vv.* 1 and 4 differently; and give a new idea to the image introduced in *v.* 4. They translate the words of *v.* 4 "Relieve our misery," and explain the words as referring not so much to a complete restoration of the exiles, as to a relief from sore trial which undoubtedly (see Ezra and Nehem., *passim*) pressed upon the young colony in its first days. According to this explanation, the image in *v.* 4 is not that of restoration and renovation, or of gratefulness and welcomeness, but rather of suddenness and unexpectedness. "O Jehovah, relieve our misery suddenly, and, as it may well be said, miraculously; as streams in the wilderness, which one moment are dead and dry, and then suddenly become flowing rivers." The first interpretation is to be preferred.

5. The meaning is, "That for which we pray will surely come to pass." See Ezra vi. 16, 22; Neh. xii. 43, for, perhaps, the quick realization of the hope. The sower goes forth in deep despondency, fearing a new disappointment: he returns with joy and rejoicing, and carries the fruit of his toil. Matt. v. 4 and Galat. vi. 7, 9, contain

a New Testament commentary upon this text.

6. *precious*] The word so translated occurs only in this place and in Job xxviii. 18 ("price"). Others take it as in the marg. The most common opinion is that it means a "handful of seed," or "cast of seed."

CXXVII. The general purport of the Psalm is, Jehovah, the Protector and Guardian of house and city. It may have been composed upon the occasion of the birth of some child of promise, and some have supposed it to have been used for service in the Temple when parents presented their first-born according to the Law (Ex. xxii. 29). The inscription is the principal reason for ascribing the Psalm to Solomon: it is omitted in some MSS. of the LXX., and in other Versions. It is rendered in the margin "of Solomon." A natural account of it, as interpreted by our translators, may be found in *v.* 2, which contains a manifest allusion to the vision of the night which foretold Solomon's glory (1 K. iii. 5-14; 2 Chron. i. 8). The place of the Psalm in the collection, and some of its language, suggest a date about or after the exile.

1. *build the house*] The words may mean "arrange" or "raise up" a "family" (see Deut. xxv. 9; 1 Sam. i. 35). But the phrase is more expressive if its import be confined to its proper meaning.

2. *the bread of sorrows*] *i.e.* The scanty bread procured by hard toil, according to the primeval judgment (marg. *reff.*).

For so he giveth &c.] *i.e.* "It is vain that ye rise up early" &c., "for He giveth to His beloved in sleep and without labour, just as to those who vainly harass themselves with labour and think not of Him."

his beloved] *i.e.* He who trusts in Him, and whom He blesses in all his ways, and gives to him riches, honours, or wisdom, as in

- 3 Lo, *children are an heritage of the LORD :*
And ^athe fruit of the womb is his reward.
 4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man ;
 So *are* children of the youth.
 5 Happy *is* the man—that ¹hath his quiver full of them :
They shall not be ashamed,
 But they ²shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

^a Gen. 33. 5.
 & 49. 4.
 Josh. 24. 3, 4.
^a Deut. 28. 4.

^a See Job 5. 4.
 Prov. 27. 11.

PSALM CXXVIII.

A Song of degrees.

- 1 BLESSED ^ais every one that feareth the LORD ;
 That walketh in his ways.
 2 ^bFor thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands :
 Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
 3 Thy wife shall be ^aas a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house :
 Thy children ^alike olive plants round about thy table.
 4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed
 That feareth the LORD.

^a Ps. 112. 1.
 & 115. 13.
 & 119. 1.
^b Isai. 3. 10.

^a Ezek. 10.
 10.
^a Ps. 52. 8.
 & 144. 12.

¹ Heb. *hath filled his quiver with them.*

² Or, *shall subdue*, as Ps.
 18. 47, or, *destroy*.

sleep. Thus He gave to Solomon himself, in sleep, His promise of all those things above mentioned.

The meaning of the A.V. is, "Vain is your anxious labour, early rising, late resting, without Jehovah's blessing : for according to His pleasure He gives sleep to His beloved, and all those things for which ye labour day and night in vain."

An over-anxious devotion to labour without confidence in God is censured. Earnest labour with eye turned to God Who blesses it, is everywhere approved in Scripture.

3. Children are the most signal of God's bounties to His beloved ; His gift, which comes from Him alone ; scarcely understood as such, or prized enough, by those who enjoy these "rewards" of God !

4. *children of the youth* i.e. Children born to a man whilst he is young and able to rear them in tender years : and they too are able to protect him as age creeps on. Cp. Gen. xxxvii. 3, xlv. 20.

5. A quiver, full of arrows, in the hand of a warrior, furnishes an expressive image of an abundant supply of needful resource. So, "Happy is the man that hath filled his quiver full" of such arrows ; that hath his bosom filled with these most precious gifts of God. He shall not be ashamed in the presence of his enemies : he shall defend his cause, with the aid of his sons, boldly "at the gate" (Deut. xxi. 19 ; Josh. xx. 4 ; Job v. 4 ; Isai. xxix. 21). Unrighteous judges, malicious accusers, false witnesses, all give way before a father so protected.

CXXVIII. Luther calls this Psalm a fit Marriage-Song for Christians ; it is used as such in our Church. It is, as to contents, a continuation, apparently, of Ps. cxxvii. An ascent of ideas, and reiteration of significant words, is conspicuous in this Psalm.

Its place in the Psalter, its language, contents, and manner, suggest that it was written after the earliest perils of return from exile had abated.

2. Lit. "The labour of thine hands (i.e. the fruit of labour), verily thou shalt eat" &c. Contrast Lev. xxvi. 16 ; Deut. xxviii. 33. Labour rewarded by God with fruit, is treated as the conspicuous gift of God. Happiness, which is here and elsewhere promised to the true worshipper of God, is painted by its externals chiefly ; the happiness in this life which is promised by Christ to His followers (Matt. v. 3, 4) is pointedly internal.

3. The wife is as the vine, the glory of the land (Num. xiii. 24) ; a proverb, everywhere, for beauty, preciousness, and fertility (Gen. xlix. 11, 22 ; Judg. ix. 13) : a plant, too, needing support, and clinging to it.

by the sides of thine house] Rather, "in the innermost chambers of thine house." The words refer to "the wife" not to "the vine." The wife "in an inner chamber" rules her household, and does not wander abroad. The vine was not trained upon the "walls of houses," but in vineyards, upon terraces, on the sides of hills, upon supports, or upon the ground. As the wife is like the vine, the children are likened to olive-plants, and surround the table on which is abundant food. The olive, another glory of the land, is a proverb, everywhere, for productiveness, luxuriance, and fatness (Judg. ix. 9 ; Jer. xi. 16 ; Hosea xiv. 6). The similitude in the text is taken from a multitude of young olive-shoots clustering round the parent-tree. The Prayer-Book Version by substituting "branches" for "plants" makes the idea of the original less easy to see.

- * Ps. 134. 3. 5 'The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion :
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of thy life.
† Gen. 50. 23. 6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children,
Job 42. 16. And peace upon Israel.
* Ps. 125. 5.

PSALM CXXIX.

A Song of degrees.

- * See Ezek. 28. 3. 1 'MANY a time have they afflicted me from "my youth,"
Hos. 2. 15. ^b May Israel now say :
* 11. 1. 2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth :
* Ps. 124. 1. Yet they have not prevailed against me.
3 The plowers plowed upon my back :
They made long their furrows.
4 The LORD is righteous :
He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
5 Let them all be confounded and turned back — that hate Zion.
* Ps. 37. 2. 6 Let them be as "the grass upon the housetops,
Which withereth afore it groweth up :
7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand ;
Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.
8 Neither do they which go by say,
"The blessing of the LORD be upon you :
We bless you in the name of the LORD.

5. *And thou shalt see*] Lit. "And see thou," i.e. with satisfaction; the imperative mood. The blessing which follows a good man, under the old Dispensation conspicuously, falls also upon his country; it is blessed all the days of his long (v. 6) life. Length of days was a well-known indication of God's favour under the old Covenant (Ex. xx. 12 &c.).

There should be a full stop after "children;" "and" is not in the original. The words "peace upon Israel" are the blessing at the end of the song (as in marg. ref.).

CXXIX. The language and contents of this Psalm, and the group of Psalms with which it is connected, favour the common opinion that it is a composition of the early days after the return from exile.

1. *my youth*] The thralldom in Egypt is often represented as the youth of Israel (see marg. ref. and Isai. xlvii. 12, 15; Jer. ii. 2, iii. 25). The young nation grew there, despite its taskmasters, till it threw off the yoke, and dwelt apart.

3. A somewhat similar image occurs in Isai. li. 23. The lashes inflicted upon the back of the writhing slave by a cruel master are compared to the long furrows pierced in the passive earth by the share of the plougher (see Mic. iii. 12).

4. A new image, naturally suggested by the last: the "righteous" God has "cut

asunder the cords of the wicked," so that the yoked and wearied steer is released from its toil (cp. ii. 3).

5. This verse and the next contain a prophecy, rather than a wish or prayer. "All the enemies of Zion (the seat of Jehovah, out of which He sends blessings upon His chosen) shall be put to shame, and driven back, i.e. with shame and confusion, from their enterprise against Zion." They shall be "as grass upon the housetops," that is not gathered nor garnered; that stirs up no cry, in mower or in passer-by, of joy and thankfulness; but withers before it come to maturity or produces flowers, unblest and blasted (Isai. xxxvii. 27; 2 K. xix. 26).

7, 8. These verses are suggestive. In contrast to the withering and blasted grass upon the housetops, they call up to the imagination a scene of rural peace and prosperous labour (cp. Ruth ii. 3). The details of such a scene are dwelt upon to exhibit conspicuously the contrast between the enemies of Israel and of God (men whose fate it is to perish suddenly and without help), and His friends, who prosper in all their ways, and are cared for as treasured fruits, and blessed again and again in every way, by passers-by and lookers on as the beloved of God.

PSALM CXXX.

A Song of degrees.

1 OUT ^aof the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.^a Lam. 3. 55.

2 Lord, hear my voice :—let thine ears be attentive

Jonah 2. 2.

To the voice of my supplications.

3 ^bIf thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities,^b Ps. 143. 2.

O Lord, who shall stand ?

Rom. 3. 20.

4 But *there is* ^cforgiveness with thee,

23. 24.

That ^dthou mayest be feared.^c Ex. 34. 7.5 ^eI wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait,^d 1 K. 8. 40.And ^fin his word do I hope.

Ps. 2. 11.

6 ^gMy soul *waiteth* for the LORD

Jer. 33. 8, 9.

More than they that watch for the morning :

^e Ps. 27. 14.^h*I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*

& 33. 20.

7 ⁱLet Israel hope in the LORD :

& 40. 1.

For ^jwith the LORD *there is* mercy,

Isai. 8. 17.

And with him *is* plenteous redemption.

& 26. 8.

8 And ^khe shall redeem Israel—from all his iniquities.

& 30. 18.

^f Ps. 119. 81.^g Ps. 63. 6.

& 119. 147.

^h Ps. 131. 3.ⁱ Ps. 86. 5,

15.

Isai. 55. 7.

^k Ps. 103. 3, 4.

Matt. 1. 21.

PSALM CXXXI.

A Song of degrees of David.

1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty :

¹ Or, *which watch unto the morning.*

CXXX. This Psalm is an example of one form of "degrees or Ascents:" see Ps. cxxviii. introd. From the depths of woe the Psalmist ascends, step after step, to absolute trust in God, and security of redemption.

It may have been used at the general confession for national transgression described in Ezra ix. : but its passionate earnestness and concentration of sorrow rather suggest individual sin and present suffering (v. 1), as its first occasion.

The words "let thine ears be attentive" (v. 2) occur in 2 Chr. vi. 40, vii. 15; and the word rendered "forgiveness" (v. 4) only in Dan. ix. 9 and Neh. ix. 17. These expressions point to a late date; earlier, however, than Chronicles.

Luther, in sharp pain of body and peril of life, consoled his spirit by reciting again and again this sixth penitential Psalm: and the Christian doctrine of the forgiveness of sin, through God's mercy, and of redemption through Christ's merits, lies almost upon the surface of this Psalm. The passionate earnestness of the Psalm is enhanced by the repetition eight times in it of the Divine name.

1. *the depths*] i.e. Of misery and sorrow, the fruit of sin.

2. *Lord*] Heb. Adonai, "Sovereign Lord."

3. *mark*] i.e. "Notice curiously and re-collect iniquities."

who shall stand!] i.e. "Stand, and endure Thy Presence?" The image seems, in the first instance, drawn from a flight in battle before a too powerful foe. Cp. Amos ii. 15; Nahum i. 6; Mal. iii. 2.

4. A sentence is understood: "Away with such dark anticipation: for with Thee is forgiveness, *the* forgiveness for which Thou art known and feared. Thy property is mercy."

That thou mayest be feared] i.e. With a holy and reverent fear which attracts and persuades.

5. *his word*] i.e. "Word of promise." "There are some," says Luther, "who instead of waiting for God, His time, His way, His help, take upon themselves to decide for Him, how, when, and in what degree, He shall aid. This is not to wait for Him; it is to make God wait upon them, and aid them as they define the way."

6. *My soul waiteth* &c.] Lit. **My soul to Jehovah;** i.e. "My soul is wholly Jehovah's. I look to Him alone; with the same confidence as, but far deeper desire than, that with which watchers wait for the morning; wait for the cheerful morning after the dark hours of night." Cp. Deut. xxviii. 67. The repetition of significant words is characteristic of this Psalm, and also expresses the length and weariness of watching. See Isai. xxi. 11.

7. *Let Israel hope* &c.] The Prayer-Book Version is more correct, "O Israel, trust in the Lord" &c. The cry of distress is changed into a declaration of trust. The original word does not mean simply "mercy," but "*the* mercy;" that is, "the mercy peculiar to God."

CXXXI. The inscription assigns this Psalm to David; and the spirit, manner, and contents of its earlier verses confirm

- 2 How he sware unto the LORD,
^aAnd vowed unto ^bthe mighty God of Jacob;
 3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
 Nor go up into my bed;
 4 I will 'not give sleep to mine eyes,—or slumber to mine eyelids,
 5 Until I ^dfind out a place for the LORD,
¹An habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.
 6 Lo, we heard of it ^eat Ephratah:
^fWe found it ^gin the fields of the wood.
 7 We will go into his tabernacles:
^hWe will worship at his footstool.
 8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest;—thou, and ^kthe ark of thy strength.
 9 Let thy priests ⁱbe clothed with righteousness;
 And let thy saints shout for joy.
 10 For thy servant David's sake
 Turn not away the face of thine anointed.
 11 ^mThe LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David;
 He will not turn from it;
ⁿOf the fruit of ^othy body will I set upon thy throne.
 12 If thy children will keep my covenant
 And my testimony that I shall teach them,
 Their children shall also sit—upon thy throne for evermore.
 13 ^pFor the LORD hath chosen Zion;
 He hath desired it for his habitation.

^a Ps. 65. 1.
^b Gen. 49. 24.

^c Prov. 6. 4.
^d Acts 7. 46.

^e 1 Sam. 17. 12.

^f 1 Sam. 7. 1.
^g 1 Chr. 13. 5.

^h Ps. 5. 7.
ⁱ 2 Chr. 6. 41, 42.

^k Ps. 78. 61.
^l Job 20. 14.

^m ver. 16.
ⁿ Isai. 61. 10.

^o Ps. 89. 3, 4, 33, &c.
^p 110. 4.

^q 2 Sam. 7. 12.
^r 2 Chr. 6. 16.

^s Luke 1. 69.
^t Acts 2. 30.

^u Ps. 43. 1, 2.

¹ Heb. *habitations*.

² Heb. *thy belly*.

painful anxiety in making preparation for building a permanent House for Jehovah. The vow need not be interpreted literally: it describes the king's fixed determination to execute the work without stint of labour and price. According to the word of Nathan (2 Sam. vii. 4 &c.), Jehovah Himself interfered to delay the execution.

3. *Surely*] In the original the same form is used as in cxxxi. 2 (see note).

the tabernacle of my house] A poetical periphrasis for "my house."

6. The words, it, may be, of the people. Ephratah, or Ephrath, is a well-known title of Bethlehem; but we have no authority for saying that the Ark was at Bethlehem. Some imagine the words to be a continuation of the words of David: "Lo! we heard of the Ark, in our tender infancy at Ephratah or Bethlehem, and found it in the fields of the wood, i.e. at Kirjath-jearim." No interpretation of the place is altogether satisfactory: the allusion may be to an incident not recorded.

7. *his tabernacles*] Lit. "His habitations" (as in v. 5 marg.), i.e. upon Mount Zion.

his footstool] i.e. The Ark dwelling within His Tabernacle. Jehovah dwells (lxxx. 1) above or upon the Cherubim: the Ark is under His feet.

8. *Arise, O LORD &c.*] A similar cry was raised in the wilderness when the Ark was moved each morning from its rest at night

(Num. x. 35, 36). The Ark of God is mentioned by name here only in the Psalms.

9. Let the priests be clad in fitting attire (see Lev. vi. 10), figuring the inner, still more glorious, attire, which they should wear, of holiness and obedience to Him Whom they serve (Job marg. ref. and Rev. xix. 8).

thy saints] i.e. Thy chosen people generally: Let them shout for joy at the majestic prospects before all.

10. To "turn away the face" is "to reject the prayer" of a petitioner. The "anointed" is, undoubtedly, the suppliant, theocratic, king who speaks in the Psalm. The prayer is, that God would abide always with His people, and grant His blessings.

11. More lit. "The Lord hath sworn to David: it is truth: He will not swerve" &c. In the prayer at the dedication of the Temple (1 K. viii. 25) Jehovah is similarly reminded of His promise to David's line (cp. marg. ref.). The intense earnestness and solemnity of the words suggest the opinion that they were written whilst the line of David was still upon the throne, and not at a later time.

13. Zion seems used here (as often in the later Pss.) for the city of Jerusalem; and the verses following describe the blessings to descend upon its king and people through the choice of it by Jehovah as His rest for ever.

- * Ps. 68. 16. 14 *"This is my rest for ever :
Here will I dwell ; for I have desired it.*
 * Ps. 147. 14. 15 *"I will abundantly bless her provision :
I will satisfy her poor with bread.*
 * 2 Chr. 6. 16 *"I will also clothe her priests with salvation :
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*
 ver. 9. 17 *"There will I make the horn of David to bud .
Ps. 149. 4. "I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*
 * Hos. 11. 12. 18 *His enemies will I clothe with shame :
But upon himself shall his crown flourish.*
 * Ezek. 29. 21. Luke 1. 69. * See 1 K. 11. 36. & 15. 4.

PSALM CXXXIII.

A Song of degrees of David.

- 1 BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity !
 2 *It is like the precious ointment upon the head,*
That ran down upon the beard, *even Aaron's beard :*
That went down to the skirts of his garments ;
 * Deut. 4. 48. 3 As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew that descended upon the*
mountains of Zion :
For there the LORD commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore.
 * Lev. 25. 21. Deut. 28. 8. Ps. 42. 8.

PSALM CXXXIV.

A Song of degrees.

- * Ps. 135. 1, 2. 1 BEHOLD, bless ye the LORD, *"all ye servants of the LORD,*
 1 Or, *surely.* 2 Or, *candle.* 3 Heb. *even together.*

14-16. The reply of Jehovah : cp. v. 16 with v. 9.

17. Or, "There will I make a horn to branch forth to, or for, David." The horn is the symbol of dominion. The image is taken from the notion of a powerful animal with one horn ; or from the custom in eastern countries of wearing a horn upon the ornaments of the head. "David," in this place, is put for David's line.

A lamp shining and giving light to a household is a common symbol of prosperity and glory. It cannot be doubted that Messiah, the branch of Jehovah and of Righteousness, the Horn of Salvation, the Lamp of Jehovah, on Whose Head a crown perpetual flourishes, is pointed at, with more or less distinctness, in these and similar passages ; and so the Jews themselves explain them. One of their daily prayers is, "Soon may the Branch, the Root of David, spring up, and His Horn be excellent" &c.

CXXXIII. The inscription is omitted by some Versions, and some Hebrew MSS. ; and it may mean, not that the Psalm was written by David, but that it breathes his spirit. The subject is brotherly love, suggested to the Psalmist by the sight or the tale of some family living together, united in affection as by blood.

2. Or, "Like the precious oil that is poured upon the head of Aaron," flowing over his beard and clothing, consecrating the man and his vestments, and filling all space around with a delightful fragrance.

Concord of brethren, united in one household and loving as brethren, is similarly excellent and precious ; diffusing all around a delightful satisfaction ; and suggesting, to those who witness it, a vision of peace and love, of sympathy and brotherhood.

the skirts of his garments] Or, "to the edge of his clothing," i.e. either the upper edge or border terminating the robe, and girdling the neck ; or perhaps the lower edge or rim, terminating the robe below the waist. The word in the original, which means literally "mouth," suits best the former of these interpretations.

3. "As the dew of Hermon that falls down upon the hills of Zion" &c. Concord again is like the dew of Hermon, which falls, gently, copiously, imperceptibly, watering the land of promise. Cp. Prov. xix. 12 ; Mic. v. 7. The summit of Hermon can be seen, towering aloft and covered with snow, to the borders of the Dead Sea. The dew falling upon Hermon first, upon the valleys below, and upon every hill and every valley through the whole of Palestine, is an apt image of "brotherly love," which, seen in a narrow circle, expands from it, as waves from a centre, and leavens a whole community and an entire nation.

For there &c.] i.e. In Zion, without a mention of which this song of brotherly love would be incomplete.

CXXXIV. A Psalm usually taken to consist of two parts. In the first part (vv. 1, 2), the Psalmist, in the name of the com-

- ^bWhich by night stand in the house of the LORD.
 2 ^cLift up your hands ¹in the sanctuary,—and bless the LORD.
 3 ^dThe LORD that made heaven and earth—^ebless thee out of Zion.

PSALM. CXXXV.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.—Praise ye the name of the LORD;
^aPraise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.
 2 ^bYe that stand in the house of the LORD,
 In ^cthe courts of the house of our God,
 3 Praise the LORD; for ^dthe LORD *is* good:
 Sing praises unto his name; ^efor *it is* pleasant.
 4 For ^fthe LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself,
 And Israel for his peculiar treasure.
 5 For I know that ^gthe LORD *is* great,
 And *that* our Lord *is* above all gods.
 6 ^hWhatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he
 In heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.
 7 ⁱHe causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth;
^jHe maketh lightnings for the rain;
 He bringeth the wind out of his ^ktreasuries.
 8 ^lWho smote the firstborn of Egypt,—^mboth of man and beast.
 9 ⁿ*Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,
^oUpon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
 10 ^pWho *smote* great nations,—and slew mighty kings;

¹ Or, in holiness.² Heb. from man unto beast.

^b 1 Chr. 9. 33.
^c 1 Tim. 2. 8.
^d Ps. 124. 8.
^e Ps. 128. 5.
^f & 135. 21.
^g Ps. 113. 1.
^h & 134. 1.
ⁱ Luke 2. 37.
^j Ps. 92. 13.
^k & 96. 8.
^l & 116. 19.
^m Ps. 119. 68.
ⁿ Ps. 147. 1.
^o Ex. 19. 5.
^p Deut. 7. 6, 7.
^q & 10. 15.
^r Ps. 95. 3.
^s & 97. 9.
^t Ps. 115. 3.
^u Jer. 10. 13.
^v & 51. 16.
^w Job 28. 25, 26.
^x & 38. 24.
^y Zech. 10. 1.
^z Job 38. 22.
^{aa} Ex. 12. 12, 29.
^{ab} Ps. 78. 51.
^{ac} & 136. 10.
^{ad} Ex. 7, & 8, & 9, & 10, & 14.
^{ae} Ps. 136. 15.
^{af} Num. 21.
^{ag} 24, 25, 26, 34, 35.
^{ah} Ps. 136. 17.

munity of Israel, incites the ministers of the Temple to alacrity in their worship. In the second part, the choir of ministers promises Jehovah's blessing to each individual according to their effectual prayer.

1. *ye servants... which stand &c.] i.e.* The priests and Levites who minister in the Temple. The offices were performed, probably, by night as well as by day. See Lev. viii. 35; 1 Sam. iii. 3; see too Luke ii. 37. The words added here in the Prayer-Book Version, "even in the courts of the house of our God," are from the LXX.

2. *Lift up your hands &c.] i.e.* Pray to Jehovah, with faces turned, and hands lifted, towards the Sanctuary.

3. Cp. the ordinary form of priestly blessing (Num. vi. 24), addressed to each individual of a community or congregation.

CXXXV. A Hallelujah Psalm (v. 1) for the Temple Service.

It has been styled a mosaic, made up for the most part of pieces selected from other Psalms, and from the prophetic writings (see marg. reff. throughout). Pss. xcvi. and xcvi. are specimens of similar compilations.

The date and author cannot be ascertained: but the language in many parts and its character seem to point to a late date.

1. *ye servants]* As in cxxxiv. 1 these

words probably indicate the priests and Levites.

5. *gods]* Elohim; gods, so called, of the heathen.

6. The specification of Jehovah's doings according to His pleasure, in heaven, earth, the sea, and all deep places puts before us in a graphic manner His particular care always and everywhere.

7. *He causeth &c.]* The clouds rising up in the far horizon fraught with abundance of rain are intended.

He maketh lightnings for the rain] Or, "to bring forth rain" when nature is parched up through a long drought. Lightning is described as in itself God's wondrous work: issuing (though fire and water seem of all things most opposed) in rain. The expression, "ends of the earth," does not strictly mean the horizon; but, the earth being a vast plain of which the ends are out of the reach of man's sight, God there stores His clouds, as He stores His winds in secret hollow treasure-houses: out of these distant, secret, stores, He summons clouds and winds at His pleasure.

10. Sihon and Og are mentioned as the most potent of the vanquished kings (Amos ii. 9): or, as the first vanquished and slain (marg. reff.). Their slaughter led to the occupation of the land of promise, and seems to have made a deep impression upon the victorious people.

- 11 Sihon king of the Amorites,—and Og king of Bashan,
 And ^aall the kingdoms of Canaan :
^a Josh. 12. 7.
- 12 ^rAnd gave their land *for* an heritage,
 An heritage unto Israel his people.
^r Ps. 78. 55. & 136. 21, 22.
- 13 ^aThy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever ;
 And thy memorial, O LORD, ¹throughout all generations.
^a Ex. 3. 15. Ps. 102. 12.
- 14 ^tFor the LORD will judge his people, ^t
 And he will repent himself concerning his servants.
^t Deut. 32. 36.
- 15 ^uThe idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold,
 The work of men's hands.
^u Ps. 115. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
- 16 They have mouths, but they speak not ;
 Eyes have they, but they see not ;
 17 They have ears, but they hear not ;
 Neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.
 18 They that make them are like unto them :
 So *is* every one that trusteth in them.
- 19 ^zBless the LORD, O house of Israel :
 Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron :
^z Ps. 116. 9, &c.
- 20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi :
 Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.
- 21 Blessed be the LORD ^vout of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem.
 Praise ye the LORD.
^v Ps. 134. 3.

PSALM CXXXVI.

- 1 O ^aGIVE thanks unto the LORD ; for *he is* good :
^a For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
^a Ps. 106. 1. & 107. 1. & 118. 1.
- 2 O give thanks unto ^tthe God of gods :
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
^t 1 Chr. 16. 34.
- 3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords :
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
^t Chr. 20. 21. & Deut. 10. 17.
- 4 To him ^dwho alone doeth great wonders :
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
^d Ps. 72. 18.
- 5 ^tTo him that by wisdom made the heavens :
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
^t Gen. 1. 1. Prov. 3. 19. Jer. 51. 15.
- 6 ^tTo him that stretched out the earth above the waters :
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
^t Gen. 1. 9. Ps. 24. 2. Jer. 10. 12.

¹ Heb. *to generation and generation.*

13, 14. God's name endures for ever on account of His glorious deeds (vv. 7, 8, 9, 10) in days past and now ; for Jehovah will "judge," *i.e.* vindicate His servants against oppression always ; and "repent" Him of chastisement ; and pity according to His mercies.

20. The mention of the Levites is peculiar to this Psalm.

21. The united prayer and blessing of all mentioned before, the house of Israel, Aaron, Levi, and all that fear God, and the Psalmist himself. In marg. ref. Jehovah's blessing is promised out of Zion. Here His blessing begins with Zion and goes forth from thence. Zion is put, as often, for Jerusalem where God dwells : and the word before us is descriptive of the day of the Psalmist, and is prophetic of after days.

CXXXVI. Some have thought that this

Psalm may have been used at the foundation of the second Temple (Ezra iii. 11) ; the Levites singing the first part of each verse, and the people responding. A great resemblance is also pointed out between the Psalm and the confession in Neh. ix. It is not, perhaps, possible to fix at what precise time a Psalm with contents apposite to so many occasions may have been first used ; but the date is without doubt after the exile.

David (1 Chr. xvi. 41) ordained that the Levites should continually chant before the Lord a Psalm, of which the burden should be, "That His mercy endureth for ever ;" and such a Psalm was apparently often used (2 Chr. vii. 3). One characteristic of this Psalm is that it repeats words and phrases of other Psalms (specially Ps. cxxxv.) and prophecies (specially Isaiah), with amplifications (cp. marg. ref.).

6. *above the waters*] The waters of the

- 7 ^aTo him that made great lights:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
8 ^bThe sun ¹to rule by day:—for his mercy *endureth* for ever:
9 The moon and stars to rule by night:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 10 ^cTo him that smote Egypt in their firstborn:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
11 ^dAnd brought out Israel from among them:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
12 ^eWith a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 13 ^fTo him which divided the Red sea into parts:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
15 ^gBut ²overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 16 ^hTo him which led his people through the wilderness:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
17 ⁱTo him which smote great kings:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
18 ^jAnd slew famous kings:—for his mercy *endureth* for ever:
19 ^kSihon king of the Amorites:—for his mercy *endureth* for ever:
20 ^lAnd Og the king of Bashan:—for his mercy *endureth* for ever:
21 ^mAnd gave their land for an heritage:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
22 *Even* an heritage unto Israel his servant:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 23 Who ⁿremembered us in our low estate:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
25 ^oWho giveth food to all flesh:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

PSALM CXXXVII.

1 BY the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.

¹ Heb. *for the rulings by day.*

² Heb. *shaked off.*

great deep (Gen. vii. 11) are meant, above which the crust of earth is outspread.

13. *divided*] i.e. "Into pieces" or "parts" instead of the expression used in marg. reff.

15. *overthrew*] See the marg., i.e. "hurled" out of his chariot into the sea: the same word is also used (cix. 23), of locusts tossed about and floating upon the wind.

19-22. If these verses were omitted, the Psalm would consist of 22 verses, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet; and the phraseology of the above-named verses in the original is such that they would seem not improbably taken from the preceding Psalm.

23. Allusion is made to God's deliverance of His people since ancient days; it may be also, to the escape from Babylon, the crowning deliverance of all.

The Prayer-Book Version of the Psalm adds a 27th verse, which is not in the Hebrew, Syriac, or Greek, but is in the Vulgate.

CXXXVII. The passion and mournfulness of this Psalm, and the absence of any allusion to Jerusalem restored, favour the opinion that it was written during the actual Captivity; and the stern imprecations at the end are suitable to the times before Babylon was actually destroyed. On

- 2 We hanged our harps
Upon the willows in the midst thereof.
- 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us ¹a
song;
And they that ^{2a}wasted us *required of us mirth, saying,*
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
- ^c Ps. 79. 1.
- 4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song—in a ³strange land?
- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *her cunning.*
- ^b Ezek. 3. 26.
- 6 If I do not remember thee,
Let my ^btongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above ⁴my chief joy.
- ^c Jer. 49. 7,
&c.
Lam. 4. 22.
Ezek. 25. 12.
^d Isai. 13. 1,
&c.
Jer. 25. 12.
& 50. 2.
^e Jer. 50. 15,
29.
Rev. 18. 6.
^f Isai. 13. 16.
- 7 Remember, O LORD, ^ethe children of Edom
In the day of Jerusalem;—who said, ⁵Rase it, rase it,
Even to the foundation thereof.
- 8 O daughter of Babylon, ^dwho art to be ^edestroyed;
Happy *shall he be,* ^{7a}that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
- 9 Happy *shall he be,* that taketh
And dasheth thy little ones against ⁸the stones.
- ¹ Heb. *the words of a song.*
² Heb. *laid us on heaps.*
³ Heb. *land of a stranger?*
⁴ Heb. *the head of my joy.*
⁵ Heb. *Make bare.*
⁶ Heb. *wasted.*
⁷ Heb. *that recompenseth*
unto thee thy deed which thou didst to us.
⁸ Heb. *the rock.*

the other hand, the tenses in vv. 1, 2 rather point to the past: the epithet applied to Babylon in v. 8, literally taken, seems to imply that its destruction was accomplished; and the words, "Happy shall he be" or "Happy is the man" &c. (v. 9), may describe the accomplishment of prophecy as well as its anticipation.

Babylon was taken by Cyrus, B.C. 538: the Jews were allowed to return, B.C. 536. Babylon was destroyed by Darius Hystaspes B.C. 516; and about the same time the Temple was rebuilt.

1. The country of Babylon was well watered by rivers and canals. The rivers were, besides Euphrates and Tigris, Chebar and Ulai (cp. Ezek. i. 3; Dan. viii. 2 notes). The captive Israelites sat by the cool streams for meditation and repose, and wept when they looked upon the mighty river and level plain through which it ran, so different from scenes at home, the mountains that stand about Jerusalem and Siloh's brook that flowed softly. There does not seem any ground for supposing the Psalmist and his companions to be Levites or priests: rather, the Psalm is the lament of private persons.

2. i.e. We hung up our harps used for joyful occasions upon the willows that grew everywhere in the land, out of reach and sight, lest the importunity of our oppressors should solicit us to cast aside sorrow, and sing to them one of those famed songs of Zion of which all the heathen had heard.

5, 6. *If I forget thee &c.*] Heb. "May my right hand forget its cunning skill in striking the chords; may my tongue forget to

sing, and cleave to my mouth; if I cease to prize Jerusalem above my chiefest joy."

7. Remember, O Lord, to Edom's sorrow and discomfiture, that day (xxxvii. 13; Obad. 12, 13) of Jerusalem—that day of its visitation by Thee—when they, the kinsmen of Israel aided and abetted the foe, and said, "Rase it, rase it" &c. (or, as marg.).

8. *O daughter of Babylon*] A well-known periphrasis for Babylon (Isai. xlvii. 1).

who art to be destroyed] Rather, "who art destroyed." A prophetic description of the future as accomplished (see Isai. xxi. 9, xxxiii. 1). The Psalmist, in these latter verses, puts himself in the midst of the desolated city, and singles out a circumstance of horror (Isai. xiv. 21; Hos. x. 14) that graphically paints the scene. Some conceive that the word, rendered "destroyed," is to be referred to the partial destruction of Babylon under Cyrus and the wish that follows to the complete destruction under Darius Hystaspes; but it is not according to the manner of the Psalms and of prophecy to draw fine distinctions between utter and partial destruction.

In explanation of these stern denunciations against Edom and Babylon we must recollect the customs of the day (2 K. viii. 12; Hos. xiii. 16); further, that Babylon's destruction was the fulfilment of prophecy; and that Babylon even in the Old Testament Scriptures assumes the character of a city opposed to God and to goodness. If the Psalmist had simply expressed a desire and longing for Babylon's destruction he

PSALM CXXXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 I WILL praise thee with my whole heart :
 "Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
 2 ^b I will worship "toward thy holy temple,
 And praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth :
 For thou hast "magnified thy word above all thy name.
 3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,
 And strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul.
 4 "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD,
 When they hear the words of thy mouth.
 5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD :
 For great *is* the glory of the LORD.
 6 "Though the LORD *be* high, yet ^a hath he respect unto the lowly :
 But the proud he knoweth afar off.
 7 ^b Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me :
 Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine
 enemies,
 And thy right hand shall save me.
 8 "The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me :
 Thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever :
^k Forsake not the works of thine own hands."

^a Ps. 119. 46.^b Ps. 28. 2.^c 1 K. 8. 29.

30.

Ps. 5. 7.

^d Isai. 42. 21.^e Ps. 102. 15,
22.^f Ps. 113. 5, 6.

Isai. 57. 15.

^g Prov. 3. 34.

Jam. 4. 6.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

^h Ps. 23. 3, 4.ⁱ Ps. 57. 2.

Phil. 1. 6.

^k See Job

10. 3, 8.

& 14. 15.

PSALM CXXXIX.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 O LORD, "thou hast searched me, and known *me*.

^a Ps. 17. 3.

Jer. 12. 3.

would only have expressed what we meet with implicitly in the pages of all the Prophets in that day. The particular expressions used sound terrible; but a Christian spirit must not be looked for throughout this ancient collection of the songs and Psalms of a people warlike, fierce, and hardly tried as the Jews.

CXXXVIII. The inscription assigns this Psalm to David, and its spirit and manner, generally, fall in with the inscription. It may have been written when he ascended the throne after the death of Saul, and after his escape from innumerable perils (cp. 2 Sam. vii).

1. *the gods*] Some interpret these words of the Angels (cp. xxix. 1); others of "the great ones of the earth" (cp. marg. ref.); but, probably, the meaning is, "Before, or, in presence of, the gods of the heathen, i.e. in scorn of, in sight of, the idols (cp. xcv. 3, xcvi. 5) who can do nothing, I will praise Jehovah, Who does miracles for me and His people."

2. If David wrote the Psalm he used the word "temple" for the earlier, simpler Sanctuary on Zion (v. 7 note).

For thou hast magnified &c.] i.e. "Thou hast performed Thy promise above that which Thy name and fame as a faithful performer of promises led us to expect and to hope." A special promise and its abundant fulfilment seem referred to.

3. The genuine confidence of David : cp. his humility (v. 6).

4. Hiram king of Tyre (2 Sam. v. 11); and Toi king of Hamath (2 Sam. viii. 10), congratulated David upon his accession, and are supposed to be here chiefly intended. But without doubt all the kings of the earth are meant; they "all shall praise Thee when they hear the words of Thy mouth," i.e. God's promises made to David and to His people and fulfilled literally and above the letter (v. 2). In Isai. xlix. 7, lii. 15, lx. 3, are somewhat similar prophetic idealizations of kings and peoples worshipping Jehovah or His Christ.

5. *in the ways of the LORD*] i.e. "Of the ways" or "doings of the LORD" (ciii. 7).

6. *he knoweth*] i.e. Notices, observes, sees them though He is "afar off" in heaven, His place of dwelling.

8. *will perfect &c.*] i.e. Will complete and fully execute all that is to be done for me within and without.

the works of thine own hands] i.e. The creatures which God has made with His hands, and specially those whom He has singled out from the whole world, and set apart, and made near to Himself.

CXXXIX. The inscription assigns this Psalm to David; and its wonderful spirit, originality, majesty, and correspondence with Psalms undoubtedly Davidic, support the authority of the title. Many commentators, on account of certain Chaldee words and phrases in it, imagine it written after the Captivity, and interpret the inscription as indicating that the Psalm was worthy of

- b 2 K. 19. 27. 2 ^bThou knowest my downsit-
 c Matt. 9. 4. Thou ^cunderstandest my thought afar off.
 John 2. 24, 25. 3 ^dThou ¹compasses^t my path and my lying down,
 d Job 31. 4. And art acquainted *with* all my ways.
 e Heb. 4. 13. 4 For *there* is not a word in my tongue,
 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before,
 And laid thine hand upon me.
 f Job 42. 3. 6 ^fSuch knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 Ps. 40. 5. It is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.
 g Jer. 23. 24. 7 ^gWhither shall I go from thy spirit?
 Jonah 1. 3. Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
 h Amos 9. 8 ^hIf I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
 2, 3, 4. ⁱIf I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art *there*.
 i Job 26. 6. 9 ⁱIf I take the wings of the morning,
 Prov. 15. 11. And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 And thy right hand shall hold me.
 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me;
 Even the night shall be light about me.
 k Job 26. 6. 12 Yea, ^kthe darkness ²hideth not from thee;
 & 34. 22. But the night shineth as the day:
 Dan. 2. 22. ³The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.
 Heb. 4. 13. 13 For thou hast possessed my reins:
 Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully
 made:
 Marvellous *are* thy works;
 And *that* my soul knoweth ⁴right well.

¹ Or, *winnowest*.² Heb. *darkeneth* not.³ Heb. *as is the darkness,*
*so is the light.*⁴ Heb. *greatly*.

the great king, and like his other compositions. An age of strong faith seems, however, more likely to have produced such a strain than a time of decline.

2. *Thou*] Emphatic, "Thou and none beside." "Downsitting," as opposed to "uprising," seems to mean "resting," *i.e.* at night from work (cp. cxxvii. 2).

afar off] *i.e.* Before conceived of the brain, and long long before uttered by the tongue! The thought just born, and in time far removed from utterance, is viewed as at a distance, and seen in its earliest birth, "*afar off*," by God.

3. *Thou compasses^t &c.*] Rather, as in the margin, *i.e.* "dost examine," "sift," and "thoroughly understand;" a metaphor from a winnowing who separates minutest atoms of chaff from the corn.

art acquainted] *i.e.* Thoroughly, as by long custom and perpetual consideration of them.

4. The instant a thought is conceived in the brain, and before the tongue has begun to be stirred up to utter it aloud, God knows it thoroughly. How much more man's ways and words and deeds!

5. These palpable images paint God as He is, always close to us, always directing, always restraining.

6. Verses 1-5 describe God's omniscience; this and the following verses His omnipresence and omnipotence.

7. An exclamation of awe and wonder, as of a feeble helpless creature, in proximity always to closely-encompassing, irresistible intelligence and might.

8. *hell*] Or, Sheol; the deepest recesses of Hades under the earth are contrasted with heaven: see Job xiv. 13 note.

9. The morning light is figured with wings which carry it in a moment from the east to the utmost parts of the west.

12. This is the reply to v. 11, as v. 10 is to v. 9.

13. *possessed*] *i.e.* "As Thou didst form and fashion, so surely Thou dost know completely and comprehend the constitution of my reins and secret hidden parts." For the "reins" see Job xix. 27 note.

covered *me*] *i.e.* "Clothed and protected me" with flesh, bones, skin (Job x. 11).

14. *my soul knoweth &c.*] *i.e.* "that Thy works are fearfully wonderful."

- 15 ¹My ¹substance was not hid from thee,
 When I was made in secret,
 And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
- 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect;
 And in thy book ²all my members were written,
³Which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was
 none of them.
- 17 ^mHow precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
 How great is the sum of them!
- 18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the
 sand:
 When I awake, I am still with thee.
- 19 Surely thou wilt ⁿslay the wicked, O God:
^oDepart from me therefore, ye bloody men.
- 20 For they ⁿspeak against thee wickedly,
 And thine enemies take thy name in vain.
- 21 ^qDo not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?
 And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred:—I count them mine enemies.
- 23 ^rSearch me, O God, and know my heart:
 Try me, and know my thoughts:
- 24 And see if there be any ⁴wicked way in me,
 And ⁵lead me in the way everlasting.

¹ Job 10. 8, 9.
 Eccl. 11. 5.

^m Ps. 40. 5.

ⁿ Isai. 11. 4.

^o Ps. 119. 115.

^p Jude 15.

^q 2 Chr. 19. 2.

Ps. 119. 168.

^r Job 31. 6.

Ps. 26. 2.

^s Ps. 5. 8.

& 143. 10.

PSALM CXL.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1 DELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man:

^aPreserve me from the ^bviolent man;

^a ver. 4.

¹ Or, strength, or, body.
² Heb. all of them.

³ Or, what days they should
 be fashioned.

⁴ Heb. way of pain, or, grief.
⁵ Heb. man of violence.

15. curiously wrought] As an embroidered garment, diversified with colours (Ex. xxvi. 36), my substance was curiously, and with art inimitable, wrought in the utter darkness of the womb.

16. i.e. "Thine eyes saw me in the womb, an embryo, an atom, unformed, invisible to any other ken; and in Thy book (lvi. 8; Mal. iii. 16) were they all written: (my) days (see marg.) were fashioned (in Thy Spirit) when as yet not one of them was." "My members" is not in the original.

18. i.e. "I count them all the day long till sleep overtakes me; I sleep and wake from sleep and am still with Thee, still counting the endless tale of Thy thoughts, Thy wondrous designs of art and wisdom displayed in man."

19. The transition from the contemplation of God in His works to the mention of His enemies recalls civ. 35.

20. The words seem to convey the idea that the impious men alluded to were in the strict sense the enemies and revilers of God. The renderings of the LXX. and Vulg. are very different.

21. The spirit of Christianity scarcely enjoins us to love the enemies of God: and the expression of the Psalmist conveys the

idea rather of the Psalmist's hatred of impiety in the abstract than of particular impious men.

23, 24. A prayer that God would search him out and see if aught in his own spirit were displeasing to Him; vouchsafe him light to find the right path, and strength to walk in it.

These verses are the very point to which the Psalm tends from the beginning. Hatred and abhorrence of the impiety which disowns or despises God, Whom the Psalmist feels to be omnipresent, omniscient, all-good, is the almost inevitable fruit of the intense realization of His perfections which this Psalm discovers: and a prayer to Him Who knows the heart that He would move the spirit of the singer to his greatest good, is a natural and appropriate conclusion.

CXL. There is a close resemblance between this Psalm and Pss. lvi. 11, lxi. 1: also between it and the following Pss. cxli., cxlii., cxliii., of which the author may be the same. It contains many uncommon words and phrases (e.g. in v. 8), and its manner is wholly Davidical. A common opinion is, that it was composed by David with reference to the machinations of Doeg &c.

- ^b Ps. 56. 6. 2 Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart ;
^c Ps. 58. 4. ^bContinually are they gathered together *for* war.
 Rom. 3. 13. 3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent ;
^d Ps. 71. 4. ^cAdders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah.
^e ver. 1. 4 ^dKeep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked ;
^f Ps. 35. 7. ^ePreserve me from the violent man ;
 & 57. 6. Who have purposed to overthrow my goings.
 & 119. 110. 5 ^fThe proud have hid a snare for me, and cords ;
 & 141. 9. They have spread a net by the wayside ;
 Jer. 18. 22. They have set gins for me. Selah.
- 6 I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God :
 Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
 7 O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
 Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
 8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked :
^g Deut. 32. Further not his wicked device ; ¹lest they exalt themselves.
 27. Selah.
- 9 *As for* the head of those that compass me about,
^h Ps. 7. 16. ^hLet the mischief of their own lips cover them.
 & 94. 23. 10 ⁱLet burning coals fall upon them :—let them be cast into the
 Prov. 12. 13. fire ;
 & 18. 7. Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
ⁱ Ps. 11. 6. 11 Let not ²³an evil speaker be established in the earth :
 Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.

¹ Or, let them not be exalted.

² Heb. a man of tongue.

³ Or, an evil speaker, a wicked man of violence, be established in the earth :

let him be hunted to his overthrow.

(1 Sam. xxii. 9, xxiii. 19 &c.). Others think that Ahithophel is referred to, and the date of the Psalm the flight before Absalom. The Syr. adds to the title, "when Saul cast the javelin against David."

1. *the evil man*] The singular is used collectively ; from "evil men." See *vv.* 4, 8.

preserve me] Or, "Thou wilt preserve me." The tense is changed, and may express either a prayer or confident hope of aid. This clause is the same as the second versicle of *v.* 4, and seems the burden of the song.

2. *are they gathered together for war*] Rather, "they stir up, excite, war."

3. *They have sharpened* &c.] *i.e.* As a serpent's tongue, quick, agile, pointed, is sharpened for a stroke. Cp. marg. reff.

4. *to overthrow my goings*] The meaning is, "to direct my steps, or feet, to ruin."

5. The artifices of the Psalmist's enemies are compared to the stratagems by which hunters entrap their prey.

by the wayside] *i.e.* "By the way in which I am to go." See the words of Saul to the Ziphites (1 Sam. xxiii. 23), to which, possibly, allusion is made.

7. *Thou hast covered* &c.] As with a helmet (cp. Eph. vi. 17 ; 1 Thess. v. 8).

8. *the desires* &c.] *i.e.* To take and destroy me. The words rendered "desires," "wicked device," occur only in this place.

lest they exalt &c.] Omit "lest." The words form a separate versicle, after David's manner.

9. *the head*] Either "the chiefs, or leaders ;" or, "the life."

Let the mischief] *i.e.* "Let the mischievous work of their own lips fall, as some heavy weight, upon them and destroy them ; let the calumnies which they heap upon me fall upon and cover themselves."

10. *Let burning coals fall*] Rather, be "dropped" or "hurled" as hail from above. Others render, "Let them drop or hurl burning coals."

let them be cast &c.] Heb. "Let Him, *i.e.* God, cast them or cause them to go into &c." "Fire," "burning coals," and "deep pits," are symbolic of various perils. The word rendered "deep pits" occurs only here. Some interpret it "floods of water," *that they rise not up again*] Cp. xxxvi. 12 ; Isai. xiv. 21, xxvi. 14.

11. *an evil speaker*] Lit. as in the margin ; *i.e.* a calumnious tongue. The word is probably used for a class.

not established in the earth] *i.e.* He shall have no settled dwelling ; he shall be driven from the haunts of men.

Evil shall hunt &c.] *i.e.* "Calamity, corresponding to his wrong-doing, shall hunt and find him out (as a beast, or bird &c.)." The violent man and the calumnious tongue point to the same person.

- 12 I know that the LORD will ^amaintain the cause of the afflicted,
And the right of the poor. ^a 1 K. 8. 45.
Ps. 9. 4.
- 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name :
 The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

PSALM CXLI.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 LORD, I cry unto thee : ^amake haste unto me ;
 Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. ^a Ps. 70. 5.
- 2 Let ^bmy prayer be ^cset forth before thee ^das incense ;
And ^ethe lifting up of my hands as ^fthe evening sacrifice. ^b Rev. 5. 8.
^c Rev. 8. 3.
^d Ps. 134. 2.
^e 1 Tim. 2. 8.
^f Ex. 29. 39.
- 3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth ;
 Keep the door of my lips.
- 4 Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practise wicked works
 with men that work iniquity :
And let me not eat of their dainties. ^f Prov. 23. 6.
- 5 ^gLet the righteous smite me ; *it shall be a kindness :*
 And let him reprove me ; *it shall be an excellent oil, which shall*
not break my head :
 For yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities. ^g Prov. 9. 8.
^h 19. 25.
ⁱ 25. 12.
Gal. 6. 1.
- 6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places,
 They shall hear my words ; for they are sweet.
- 7 Our bones are scattered ^hat the grave's mouth,
 As when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. ^h 2 Cor. 1. 9.

¹ Heb. directed.² Or, Let the righteoussmite me kindly, and re-
prove me ; let not theirprecious oil break my head,
&c.

13. *shall dwell in thy presence*] i.e. Under Thy protection, as children under that of parents (xvi. 11).

CXLI. This Psalm is entitled a Psalm of David, and it is considered by those who accept this authorship to have been composed during his persecution by Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 2). Others question this early date on account of the involved style of the Psalm and the obscurity of a portion of its contents ; thinking it probable that the Psalm was written in imitation of David's style, they assign as its historical ground the flight before Absalom, and the temporary exclusion of David from the worship of the Sanctuary. The numerous points of connexion with Ps. cxl. and the following Psalms seem to warrant the inference that they were composed at the same time, and by the same writer.

2. *set forth*] In the original the same verb is used of the sacrificial service of the Temple (2 Chr. xxix. 35, xxxv. 10, 16).

The offering of incense appears to have accompanied that of the morning and evening Sacrifice (Ex. xxx. 7, 8), and the rising of the smoke of the incense seems to have been symbolical of the ascent to heaven of the prayers of the worshippers (cp. marg. reff.). The Psalmist prays that whilst debarred from the appointed services of the Tabernacle (or Temple), his prayer may rise with acceptance before God, like the

cloud of incense, and may prove as acceptable in His sight as the Sacrifices of the Sanctuary. The parallelism shews that the "lifting up of the hands" in the second clause of the verse is equivalent to the "prayer" of the first clause (cp. xxviii. 2 note).

3. The Psalmist had need of special watchfulness over his tongue, lest he should be betrayed into the use of rash and unguarded language.

Some render this verse, "Set, O Lord, a watch, or a muzzle upon my mouth ;" or, "Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, a guard upon the door of my lips."

4. *men*] A peculiar form of a Heb. word (plural) is here used, which is found elsewhere only in Prov. viii. 4 and Isai. liii. 3. The word denotes great men, men of rank or renown. The words translated "practise" and "dainties" do not occur elsewhere.

5. This verse is extremely obscure. The meaning of the first clause seems to be that the reproofs of a friend would be taken, as designed, in good part, and neither resented, nor deemed occasion for mourning. The meaning of the second clause probably is, "I will continue to encounter the evil deeds of my adversaries with no other weapon than prayer." Cp. cix. 4, 28.

6, 7. Verses equally, or yet more, obscure. Verse 6 may be translated : "Their rulers

- * 2 Chr. 20.
12.
Ps. 25. 15.
& 123. 1, 2.
* Ps. 119.
110.
& 140. 5.
& 142. 3.
* Ps. 35. 8.
- 8 But ¹mine eyes *are* unto thee, O God the Lord:
In thee is my trust; ¹leave not my soul destitute.
9 Keep me from ²the snares *which* they have laid for me,
And the gins of the workers of iniquity.
10 ¹Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
Whilst that I withal ²escape.

PSALM CXLII.

- * Ps. 57,
title.
* 1 Sam. 22. 1.
& 24. 3.
* Ps. 102,
title.
Isai. 26. 16.
* Ps. 143. 4.
* Ps. 140. 5.
- ²²Maschil of David; A Prayer * when he was in the cave.
- 1 I CRIED unto the LORD with my voice;
With my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.
2 ^aI poured out my complaint before him;
I shewed before him my trouble.
3 ^bWhen my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest
my path.
* ^cIn the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for
me.

¹ Heb. *make not my soul*
bare.

² Heb. *pass over.*

³ Or, A Psalm of David,
giving instruction.

(or leaders) are cast down (*i.e.* shall certainly be cast down, and are already beheld by the Psalmist as cast down) by the sides of the rock; and they (*i.e.* the people) shall hear my words, for they are sweet." The meaning of *v.* 7 may be: "Just as when one furrows and cuts into (or breaks up) the earth (with a view of scattering seed in it), so (*i.e.* in the purpose of the Psalmist's adversaries) our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave." The word "wood" is not in the original. The meaning of the whole would be as follows: In spite of the continued machinations of his adversaries and the rebukes of his friends, the Psalmist expresses his determination (*v.* 5) to have recourse to no other weapon than prayer. In *vv.* 6 and 7 he expresses his full conviction that although it was the design of his enemies to destroy him and his followers, and to scatter their bones, nevertheless God, in His righteous providence, would so defeat their counsels and turn them against themselves, that they should perish by a destruction similar to that which they had prepared for him; whilst he, whose eyes had been ever fixed upon the Lord, should entirely escape.

8. *leave not my soul destitute*] Or, "pour not out my soul," *i.e.* unto death (cp. Isai. liii. 12).

9. *from the snares*] Lit. "from the hands of the snare;" in reference probably to "stony places" (*v.* 6), which is literally "the hands of the rock."

10. The word rendered "nets" occurs only in this place, as the closely corresponding word in cxi. 10, which is rendered "deep pits," occurs there only. It seems not improbable that the same word stood originally in the text in both places, and should be rendered "pit" in both.

Whilst that I withal escape] Rather, "whilst

I pass over (*i.e.* in safety) at the same time." Cp. iv. 8.

CXLII. This Psalm, which is the last which bears a title referring to the persecutions of Saul, is supposed, like the lviith, to describe David's emotions and supplications in the cave of Adullam or of Engedi. The similarity of tone between this and the Psalms of the earlier books is to be noticed.

The allusion in *v.* 3 to the snare privily laid for the Psalmist by his enemies connects this Psalm with *vv.* 9, 10 of the preceding, and both with lviii. 6, possibly also with 1 Sam. xxiv. 11. Cp. also cxi. 5.

The Psalm is expressive of the deepest sense of danger and of desertion, amounting almost to despair. But a conviction of the utter hopelessness of his condition, so far as human succour was concerned, serves to excite within the breast of the Psalmist a determination to trust more implicitly and more exclusively in God. This resolution, as in other Psalms of a similar character, converts his valley of Achor into a door of hope; and the Psalm ends with a bright description of a morning of gladness succeeding to a night of sorrow. The writer anticipates, moreover, the joy and gratitude with which the righteous would hail his deliverance.

1. This and the following verses agree very closely with the beginning of Ps. lxxvii.; and the verbs put by the A. V. in the past tense are by many translated in the present.

3. The clause, "when my spirit was overwhelmed . . . path," is taken by some to belong to the preceding verse. In this case "then" may be rendered by "but." As in *v.* 1 the Psalmist finds his refuge only in Jehovah, so in this verse he finds his comfort in the conviction that whilst exposed to dangers, seen and unseen, Jehovah was intimately

- 4 ^aI looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but ^e*there was* no man ^dPs. 69. 20.
 • that would know me: ^ePs. 31. 11.
 Refuge ²failed me; ³no man cared for my soul. & 88. 8, 18.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD :

I said, ^fThou art my refuge and ^gmy portion ^hin the land of the living. / Ps. 46. 1.
 & 91. 2.

6 Attend unto my cry; ⁱfor I am ^jbrought very low :

Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. / Ps. 16. 5.
 & 73. 26.
 & 119. 57.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name:

^kThe righteous shall compass me about; ^lfor thou shalt deal bountifully with me. / Ps. 27. 13.
 & Ps. 116. 6.
 & Ps. 119. 17.

PSALM CXLIII.

A Psalm of David.

1 HEAR my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications :

^aIn thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.

2 And ^benter not into judgment with thy servant :

For ^cin thy sight shall no man living be justified.

¹ Or, *Look on the right hand, and see.*

² Heb. *perished from me.*

³ Heb. *no man sought after my soul.*

/ Ps. 119. 17.
 & Ps. 31. 1.
 & Job 14. 3.
 & Ex. 34. 7.
 Job 4. 17.
 & 9. 2.
 & 15. 14.
 & 25. 4.
 Ps. 130. 3.
 Eccl. 7. 20.
 Rom. 3. 20.
 Gal. 2. 16.

acquainted with them all, and that His watchful eye was ever upon him for good.

4. Rather, as in the margin. The meaning seems to be that the enemies of the Psalmist were so many, and that their snares beset his path so thickly, that even God's all-seeing eye could discern no available human succour, and no way of escape provided for him. The right side is the side of defence (xvi. 8, cix. 31), as also of attack (cix. 6).

there was &c.] Lit. "There is to (or for) me none acknowledging," i.e. none willing to recognise me, or treat me with kindness. *no man cared for my soul]* Lit. "There is no one seeking (or inquiring for) my soul," i.e. with a view to my good.

6. *my cry]* The word used is generally a cry of joy; here, of earnest supplication (xvii. 1 note; Lam. ii. 19, where the verb occurs in the sense of crying out in sorrow).

7. The word rendered "prison" occurs in no other passage in the Psalter, and bears a different meaning in other places of the Old Test. Cp. Isai. xlii. 7. The title of the Psalm affords a probable clue to the use of the word in this place.

shall compass me about] The words in the original may mean, "On my account the righteous shall adorn themselves with crowns" (i.e. shall rejoice on my account), or "shall crown themselves with me," i.e. shall make me their crown of glory (cp. 1 Cor. xii. 26).

The close of the Psalm, in a manner characteristic of the Psalms of David (e.g. xiii. 6, xl. 16, 17), and especially those of the time of his persecution, at the hands of Saul, expresses the writer's confident expectation of eventual deliverance from his foes; and herein may be traced a prediction of the eventual triumph of good over evil.

The reference to the joyful congratulations of the righteous seems to imply a revelation to the soul of the Psalmist, like that made to Elijah when he seemed to himself to be the only champion for the truth, that God had still reserved a remnant, amidst prevailing iniquity, who were ready to rejoice and to be glad (cp. 1 K. xix. 18).

CXLIII. This is the last of the seven Penitential Psalms. The inscription in the Hebrew assigns it to David, and in some copies of the LXX. the words are added, "when Absalom his son pursued him." But the general character and phraseology of the Psalm favour the supposition of a later date. It is closely connected with preceding Psalms (e.g. lxxxviii.) by its subject, and partially by its phraseology. If regarded as a late Psalm it bears witness to the manner in which, from the time of the exile downwards, the Davidic Psalms have been the spiritual treasury of the Church. Selah (v. 6) marks the division of the Psalm into two equal parts. Its use is not to be regarded as a mark of antiquity in this case (see p. 104, note 2).

1. Or, "In Thy faithfulness answer me, in (i.e. even in, or in accordance with) Thy justice (or righteousness)." The Psalmist pleads not only God's faithfulness to His promises, i.e. His essential and eternal truth, but also His justice and His righteousness (cp. 1 John i. 9).

2. It is not a legal but an evangelical righteousness on which the Psalmist's plea for mercy is based. If God were to deal with man on the ground of his own merits, no flesh should be justified. And not only men, but also Angels fall short of the standard of God's holiness. Cp. the marg. reff.

- 3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ;
He hath smitten my life down to the ground ;
He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been
long dead.
- ^d Ps. 77. 3. 4 ^d Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me ;
& 142. 3. My heart within me is desolate.
- ^e Ps. 77. 12. 5 ^e I remember the days of old ;—I meditate on all thy works ;
I muse on the work of thy hands.
- ^f Ps. 88. 9. 6 ^f I stretch forth my hands unto thee :
^g Ps. 63. 1. ^g My soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.
- 7 Hear me speedily, O LORD : my spirit faileth :
Hide not thy face from me,
^h Ps. 28. 1. ^h Lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.
- ⁱ See Ps. 46. 5. 8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness ⁱ in the morning ;
For in thee do I trust :
^k Ps. 5. 8. ^k Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ;
^l Ps. 25. 1. For ^l I lift up my soul unto thee.
- 9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies :
I ^m flee unto thee to hide me.
- ⁿ Ps. 25. 4, 5. 10 ⁿ Teach me to do thy will ;—for thou *art* my God :
& 139. 24. ⁿ Thy spirit *is* good ; lead me into ⁿ the land of uprightness.
- ^o Neh. 9. 20. 11 ^o Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake :
^p Ps. 119. 25, 37, 40, &c. For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.
- 12 And of thy mercy ^q cut off mine enemies,
And destroy all them that afflict my soul :
^r Ps. 116. 16. For ^r I *am* thy servant.

PSALM CXLIV.

*A Psalm of David.*1 BLESSED *be* the LORD ³ my strength,^a Which teacheth my hands ⁴ to war, *and* my fingers to fight :^a 2 Sam. 22. 35.

Ps. 18. 34.

¹ Or, *for I am become like,*
^d Ps. 88. 4.² Heb. *hide me with thee.*³ Heb. *my rock*, Ps. 18. 2, 31.⁴ Heb. *to the war*, &c.

3. A consciousness of guilt and of deserved punishment seems to prompt the Psalmist's prayer for forgiveness.

smitten] Rather, "trodden or crushed."
darkness] The word (which is plural) occurs elsewhere in the Psalter only in lxxiv. 20, and lxxxviii. 6.

as those that have been long dead] Rather, "as those that are for ever dead," *i.e.* buried alive for ever. The question of a future life is not involved in the comparison. Cp. Lam. iii. 6.

4. *desolate*] "Amazed," "astonied," or "dispirited." The word in the form here used is of rare occurrence, and is not found elsewhere in the Psalter.

6. The word "thirsteth" is not in the original, but the meaning is the same whether the Psalmist is represented as lifting up his soul to God, or his soul is represented as thirsting after God.

8. *I trust...I lift*] Or, "I have trusted...I have lifted." Cp. xxv. 1, 2.

9. *I flee unto thee to hide me*] The words of the original have been explained: (1) To Thee have I entrusted or confided my troubles ; (2) In Thee have I hidden myself, *i.e.*

found a refuge or hiding-place. The latter interpretation is perhaps in greater conformity with the general phraseology of David.

10. *Thy spirit is good* &c.] Rather, "let Thy Spirit, a good (Spirit), lead me" &c.

the land of uprightness] Lit. "the land of a level region, or plain;" in allusion to the land on the east of the Jordan, which was inhabited by the Reubenites, as being well adapted for the support of their flocks (Deut. iv. 43; Jer. xlviii. 21). Figuratively, the words denote "equity," or "righteousness."

11, 12. It is worthy of observation that the Psalmist pleads God's righteousness as the foundation on which he bases his supplication for the deliverance of his soul from trouble, and God's lovingkindness or mercy as that on which he grounds his prayer, or his conviction, that God will destroy his enemies. This is not the language of a revengeful and bloodthirsty spirit.

CXLIV. This Psalm is manifestly the production of one who was the generally recognized ruler of the nation. It refers, moreover, to a time of danger from foreign foes (vv. 6, 7, 11), and perhaps also to present or

2 ^{b1} My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer;
My shield, and *he* in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

^b 2 Sam. 22.
2, 3, 40, 46.

3 ^c LORD, what *is* man, that thou takest knowledge of him!
Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!

^c Job 7. 17.
Ps. 8. 4.

4 ^d Man is like to vanity:

Heb. 2. 6.
^d Job 4. 19.

^e His days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.

^e 14. 2.
Ps. 39. 6.

5 ^f Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down:

^f 62. 9.
^f Ps. 102. 11.

^g Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

^g Ps. 18. 9.
Isai. 64. 1.

6 ^h Cast forth lightning, and scatter them:

^h Ps. 104. 32.
^h Ps. 18. 13,

Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

14.
ⁱ Ps. 18. 16.

7 ^j Send thine ² hand from above;

^j ver. 11.
Ps. 69. 1, 2,

^k Rid me, and deliver me out of great waters,

14.

¹ Or, *My mercy.*

² Heb. *hands.*

past rebellion on the part of the Psalmist's own subjects (see *v.* 2 note). The former part of the Psalm is based upon the earlier Psalms (see marg. ref.), and in particular upon the xviiith, which was composed long after the fight with Goliath, to which the inscription of the LXX. refers this Psalm. It might naturally close with the refrain of *v.* 11, and there seems no necessary connexion between the two parts. The latter part has not the allusions to earlier Psalms which abound in the former. There is more vigour and originality in it. It abounds in the use of peculiar words, and it bears no direct traces of having proceeded from the same writer.

The Psalm in its mingled tones of prayer and praise, is a fit connecting link between the supplicatory Psalms which go before, and the strains of thanksgiving which follow it.

1. See the marginal renderings. The first two verses of this Psalm are a direct echo of David's great song of thanksgiving as recorded in Ps. xviii. and 2 Sam. xxii. Five of the descriptive terms which occur in *v.* 2 are taken from xviii. 2.

2. *My goodness* See marg. An abbreviated form, apparently, of "the God of my mercy."

The only other place where the verb rendered "subdueth" occurs in this form, or in this signification, is Isai. xlv. 1. If the reading "my people" be retained (in xviii. 47, it is "peoples;" and the plural is read here by many MSS.), the word "subdueth" would naturally refer to the quelling of rebellion, as in the case of Absalom, not to the exercise of despotic power. Some who think the Psalm, though composed at a later period, designed to express the feelings with which David, who had already been anointed by Samuel, entered upon the conflict with Goliath, also consider the reference to be to David's hope and conviction that Jehovah would constrain the people to accept him as their king.

3. *the son of man*] Rather, "the son of frail or mortal man."

5. This verse follows after *v.* 2 in sense, and the order of Ps. xviii. is continued; but that which is recorded historically in Ps. xviii. is here the subject of the Psalmist's prayer. The connexion of the interpolated strophe (*vv.* 3, 4) with the preceding and the following may be as follows. Whereas in Ps. xviii. the Psalmist describes the greatness of his sorrow, and records his invocation of Jehovah in his distress, here, in the form of an exclamation, he expresses his conviction of the utter insignificance and unworthiness of man, and of the wondrous condescension of God in deigning to interpose in his behalf.

Touch the mountains &c.] As the latent fire needs but the divine summons to evoke it into action, so the wicked have within themselves the elements of misery, which await only a signal from above to be brought into full operation. The primary allusion is evidently to the Theophany on Mount Sinai (*cp.* Ex. xix. 18, xx. 18). The "mountains" here are the hostile powers (*cp.* lxviii. 16, lxxvi. 4).

6. *Cast forth lightning*] Lit. "Lighten lightning." The verb is found in no other place. *scatter them...destroy them*] The reference is clearly to the Psalmist's enemies who are mentioned in xviii. 3, but whose existence is here only implied.

7. *Cp.* marg. ref. The verb "rid," here used with reference to the "great waters," is used in *v.* 11 with reference to the aliens, as in xviii. 17 with reference to the Psalmist's "strong enemy," and those who "hated" him; thus affording a key to the interpretation of the meaning of the "great" or many "waters." What is there related historically is still, in this place, the subject of supplication.

The word rendered in this verse and *v.* 11 "rid," and in *v.* 10 "deliver," is elsewhere used in the sense of opening wide, always in conjunction with the mouth or the lip.

- ¹ Ps. 54. 3. From the hand of ¹strange children ;
^{Mal.} 2. 11. 8 Whose mouth ^mspeaketh vanity,
^m Ps. 12. 2. And their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.
- ⁿ Ps. 40. 3. 9 I will ⁿsing a new song unto thee, O God :
 Upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing
 praises unto thee.
- ^o Ps. 18. 50. 10 ^o*It is he* that giveth ¹salvation unto kings :
 Who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.
- ^p ver. 7. 8. 11 ^pRid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children,
 Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
 And their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood :
- ^q Ps. 123. 3. 12 That our sons *may be* ^qas plants grown up in their youth ;
 That our daughters *may be* as corner stones, ²polished *after* the
 similitude of a palace :
- 13 That our garners *may be* full, affording ³all manner of store :
 That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in
 our streets :
- ¹ Or, victory. ² Heb. cut. ³ Heb. from kind to kind.

strange children] Rather, "sons of a strange land," *i.e.* heathen.

8. *is a right hand of falsehood*] A phrase peculiar to this place (cp. Isai. xlv. 20). Elsewhere, a tongue or lips of falsehood (cp. xxxi. 18, cix. 2). The allusion is to the lifting up of the right hand in an oath or solemn asseveration.

9. The Psalmist's expectation of a favourable answer to his prayer is so confident that he utters unconditionally a vow of thanksgiving. See xxxiii. 3 note.

O God] The only place in books IV. and V. (see p. 94), with the exception of the composite Ps. cviii., in which God is addressed as Elohim, without the pronominal suffix. In book IV. Elohim occurs once as a predicate of Jehovah, as the true God (c. 3). In other places in the last two books the word is used of created beings (cp. xxxviii. 1 note).

Upon a psaltery and c] Rather, "Upon a psaltery with ten strings" (cp. xxxiii. 2 note). Omit "and."

10. *It is he that giveth*] Lit. "Who giveth." There is a change of person. The construction is also characteristic of Ps. xviii. (*e.g.* vv. 33, 34).

unto kings] Lit. "unto the kings," *i.e.* the royal house of David, as distinguished from other "kings of the earth" (cxlviii. 11). Even they have no saving power of their own (cp. cxlvi. 3). It is God Who gives it to them.

Who delivereth David his servant] This corresponds with marg. ref. It might seem to imply the Davidic origin of the Psalm, as identifying David with the supplicant of vv. 7 and 11; but the present tense may here be understood retrospectively as in xviii. 50 it is used prospectively; or "David" may here stand for David and his seed as "Jacob" is used to denote Jacob's descendants (cxlvii. 19).

the hurtful sword] Lit. "the sword of evil." The allusion may be to the destructiveness of the sword, or it may be to the badness of the cause in which the sword from which the Psalmist prays for deliverance was drawn.

11. *Rid me, and deliver me*] *i.e.* probably, "As Thou didst deliver David Thy servant, so now also rid and deliver me." The refrain of this verse, taken from vv. 7 and 8, seems to form a suitable termination to the Psalm. The remaining portion is involved in great obscurity and difficulty.

12. *That our sons may be*] Or, "Whose sons are" &c., and similarly throughout vv. 13, 14. The construction is peculiar and may have been suggested by v. 8.

grown up] Rather, "well-grown," or "grown large in their youth." The sons are aptly compared to plants or trees, which flourish in the open air, whilst the daughters are compared to sculptured pillars, which impart grace as well as strength to the interior of a building.

corner stone] Rather, "corner pillars," or "columns." Cp. Zech. ix. 15, the only other place where the word occurs.

polished] Rather, "cut" or "sculptured" (as in marg.). The word is usually applied to wood. The use of male and female figures to support porticos seems to be of more modern origin.

after the similitude of a palace] Perhaps "according to the model (or pattern) of the Temple" (cp. the Prayer-Book Version). The Temple was the great architectural model of the Hebrews.

13. *affording all manner of store*] Lit. "pouring forth abundantly from kind to kind," *i.e.* all descriptions of produce. The word rendered "affording" occurs in the Psalter only in this place and in cxl. 9.

in our streets] Rather, "in our fields or open pastures."

- 14 *That our oxen may be* ¹strong to labour;
That there be no breaking in, nor going out;
That there be no complaining in our streets.
- 15 ¹Happy is that people, that is in such a case:
Yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.

¹ Dent. 33.
 29.
 Ps. 33. 12.
 & 65. 4.
 & 146. 5.

PSALM CXLV.

David's ^a*Psalm of praise.*

^a Ps. 100,
 title.

- 1 (N) I WILL extol thee, my God, O king;
 And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
- 2 (2) Every day will I bless thee;
 And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
- 3 (2) ^bGreat is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
²And ^chis greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 (7) ^dOne generation shall praise thy works to another,
 And shall declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 (7) I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty,
 And of thy wondrous ³works.
- 6 (7) And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts:
 And I will ⁴declare thy greatness.
- 7 (7) They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness,
 And shall sing of thy righteousness.
- 8 (7) ^eThe LORD is gracious, and full of compassion;
 Slow to anger, and ⁵of great mercy.

^b Ps. 96. 4.
 & 147. 5.
^c Job 5. 9.
 & 9. 10.
 Rom. 11. 33.
^d Isai. 38. 19.

^e Ex. 34. 6, 7.
 Num. 14. 18.
 Ps. 86. 5, 15.
 & 103. 8.

¹ Heb. *owe to bear burdens*, or, *loaden with flesh*.

² Heb. *and of his greatness there is no search*.

³ Heb. *things*, or, *words*.

⁴ Heb. *declare it*.

⁵ Heb. *great in mercy*.

14. *That our oxen may be strong*] The meaning is doubtful. It may be, "our oxen laden with produce," or "our kine fruitful," or "our chiefs (or heads of families) firmly established."

That there be no breaking in &c.] Rather, "no breach," i.e. through hostile assault, "and no going out," i.e. into captivity. The word rendered "breaking in" occurs in the Psalter elsewhere only in cvi. 23.

That there be no complaining &c.] Rather, "and no cry of sorrow (cp. Isai. xxiv. 11; Jer. xiv. 2) in our open places," i.e. the places where the people commonly assembled near the gate of the city. The word rendered "complaining" does not occur elsewhere in the Psalter.

15. *Happy is that people* &c.] Rather, "Blessed is the people" &c. This seems to be the correlative clause to v. 12. It is possible, owing to the close correspondence of the initial words of the two verses in the Hebrew, that the two words which begin this verse may have dropped out of the beginning of v. 12.

CXLV. This Psalm is the last of the alphabetical Psalms, one letter alone being deficient, for which deficiency no satisfactory reason can be assigned. It is the only Psalm which bears as its title the word Tehillah (praise), a title taken probably from the last verse, and from which the whole of the Psalter derives its name, Tehillim (see

p. 94). It is said to have been the ancient Church's Psalm for the mid-day meal, and St. Chrysostom says that v. 15 was used at the Holy Communion.

The name of David is given in the title as the author, as it is to four of the other alphabetical Psalms. The subject of the Psalm is well described in its title. It is a magnificent ode of praise to the all-powerful and all-merciful Creator, Whose providential care over all the creatures of His hands is as minute as His dominion is universal and His kingdom everlasting.

1. *O king*] Or, "the king." If David, or one of his posterity, wrote this Psalm, there is special force and propriety in the appellation, "the king." The Psalmist would transfer to the Heavenly King the honour paid to himself as the earthly.

5. Lit. "The splendour of the glory of Thy majesty, and the words (cp. lxxv. 3 marg., and the title of the Books of Chronicles, "words," i.e. histories of the days) of Thy wonders will I meditate upon" (or rehearse, in poetry).

6. *And I will declare thy greatness*] Or, according to another reading, "And as to Thy mighty works I will declare (or rehearse) it," i.e. each of them.

7. *utter*] Lit. "pour forth" (as from a fountain). As in Ps. lxxviii., the theme of the Psalmist is not only the majesty but also the mercy of the Lord.

- ^s Ps. 100. 5. 9 (b) ^sThe LORD is good to all :
 Nah. 1. 7. And his tender mercies are over all his works.
- ^p Ps. 19. 1. 10 (γ) ^pAll thy works shall praise thee, O LORD ;
 And thy saints shall bless thee.
- 11 (δ) They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,
 And talk of thy power ;
- 12 (ε) To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts
 And the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
- ^a Ps. 146. 10. 13 (ζ) ^aThy kingdom is ¹an everlasting kingdom,
 1 Tim. 1. 17. And thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.
- 14 (δ) The LORD upholdeth all that fall,
 And ¹raiseth up all those that be bowed down.
- ^t Ps. 146. 8. 15 (v) ^tThe eyes of all ²wait upon thee ;
^k Ps. 104. 27. And ¹thou givest them their meat in due season.
- ^t Ps. 136. 25. 16 (δ) Thou openest thine hand,
^m Ps. 104. 21. ^mAnd satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
 & 147. 9. 17 (ς) The LORD is righteous in all his ways,
 And ³holy in all his works.
- ⁿ Deut. 4. 7. 18 (ρ) ⁿThe LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
^o John 4. 24. To all that call upon him ^oin truth.
- 19 (γ) He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him :
 He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
- ^p Ps. 31. 23. 20 (ω) ^pThe LORD preserveth all them that love him :
 & 97. 10. But all the wicked will he destroy.
- 21 (Γ) My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD :
 And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

^a Ps. 103. 1. 1 ⁴ PRAISE ye the LORD.—^a Praise the LORD, O my soul.

¹ Heb. a kingdom of all ages.

² Or, look unto thee.
³ Or, merciful, or, bountiful.

⁴ Heb. Hallelujah.

12. *mighty acts*] Rather, "acts of power," as compared with "power" in v. 11.

13. *an everlasting kingdom*] Lit. as in the marg. LXX. βασιλεία πάντων τῶν αἰώνων. The word translated "everlasting" (LXX. αἰών) appears to be here used in its most comprehensive sense, as looking back to all eternity (cp. lxxvii. 5), and looking forward to all futurity (cp. lxxvii. 7).

throughout all generations] This phrase is probably taken from xlv. 17. Cp. xc. 1. The resemblance between this verse and Dan. iv. 3, 34 is close. It by no means follows, however, that the Psalm is of Maccabean date, or that the Hebrew of the Psalmist is borrowed from the Chaldee of Daniel. The facts of the case point to the opposite inference.

14. The minuteness of God's providential care is here represented as co-extensive with the universality of His dominion.

The word rendered "raiseth up" occurs only here and in marg. ref., where, as here, it is found in conjunction with the word rendered "bowed down;" a word which occurs only in three other places throughout the Old Testament.

15. *wait upon thee*] Or, "look expectantly to Thee." The verb occurs in the Psalter only in marg. ref., cxix. 116, 166, cxlvi. 5.

thou givest] The personal pronoun and the participle are used, "Thou (art) giving," in due season] Lit. "in its season." This and the following verse correspond with civ. 27, 28.

16. Lit. "(Thou art) opening...and satisfying (or supplying) to every living thing (its) desire."

17. *holy*] Or, "merciful" (as in the marg.) The word is used as an attribute of God only here and in Jer. iii. 12.

20. *all the wicked will he destroy*] It must not be overlooked that this declaration occurs in a song of praise. The whole of the context is utterly inconsistent with the expression of emotions of anger or revenge.

CXLVI. The Psalter, in harmony with its general title, Tehillim, i.e. Songs of Praise (see Ps. cxlv. Introduction), ends with five Hallelujah Psalms, so called from their beginning and ending with Hallelujah. This group of Psalms, of which the cxlvth is the first, has been improperly designated the Greek Hallel, to distinguish it from that earlier group of Psalms (cxiii.-cxviii.) which is known as the Egyptian Hallel; and it formed a part of the Jewish daily form of Morning Prayer.

The inscription of the LXX., which ascribes this and the two following Psalms to

- 2 ^b While I live will I praise the LORD :
 I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
- 3 ^c Put not your trust in princes,
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no ¹ help.
- 4 ^d His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ;
 In that very day ^e his thoughts perish.
- 5 ^f Happy is he that ~~hath~~ the God of Jacob for his help,
 Whose hope is in the LORD his God :
- 6 ^g Which made heaven, and earth,
 The sea, and all that therein is :—which keepeth truth for ever :
- 7 ^h Which executeth judgment for the oppressed :
 Which giveth food to the hungry.
ⁱ The LORD looseth the prisoners :
- 8 ^j The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind :
^m The LORD raiseth them that are bowed down :
 The LORD loveth the righteous :
- 9 ⁿ The LORD preserveth the strangers ;
 He relieveth the fatherless and widow :
^o But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

¹ Or, *salvation*.

^b Ps. 104. 33.

^c Ps. 118. 8, 9.
 Isai. 2. 22.

^d Ps. 104. 29.
 Eccl. 12. 7.
 Isai. 2. 22.

^e See 1 Cor. 2. 6.

^f Ps. 144. 15.
 Jer. 17. 7.
^g Gen. 1. 1.

Rev. 14. 7.
^h Ps. 103. 6.

ⁱ Ps. 107. 9.
^j Ps. 68. 6.

^k 107. 10, 14.
^l Matt. 9. 30.

^m John 9. 7-32.
ⁿ Ps. 145. 14.

^o 147. 6.
 Luke 13. 13.

^p Deut. 10. 18.

^q Ps. 68. 5.
^r Ps. 147. 6.

Haggai and Zechariah, is so far consistent with the internal evidence that they both bear witness to a date of composition subsequent to the exile. This Psalm, which was probably written by one who had himself been a stranger in a strange land (see v. 9 note), is an earnest exhortation to trust in the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth, Whose faithfulness and tender mercies are more especially displayed on behalf of those who have no earthly helper.

The points of connexion, both of thought and expression, with Ps. cxlv. are numerous (*e.g.* vv. 5, 8, 10, compared with cxlv. 13, 14, 13), and seem to point to an identity of authorship.

1. *Praise the LORD, O my soul*] As a fit prelude to these Psalms of praise the Psalmist attunes his own soul to that work of praise in which he summons all creation to join. Cp. ciii. 22, civ. 1, 33, 34.

2. *I will sing praises*] *i.e.* Sing to the accompaniment of an instrument.

while I have any being] The form of the Hebrew word thus translated denotes continuous existence, whether past or future.

3. *in princes*] This word is used as well of domestic as of foreign rulers, and therefore it cannot indicate a Maccabean date for the Psalm.

4. *he returneth to his earth*] *i.e.* The earth out of which he was originally made (cp. Gen. ii. 7), and unto which he must again return. 1 Macc. ii. 63, was probably taken from this Psalm.

5. *for his help*] Rather, "whose help is the God of Jacob."

6. The ground of confidence in God rather than in man is here explained. The opening phrase is characteristic of the later Psalms.

which keepeth] In the original of this clause the word rendered "which" is the definite article prefixed to a participle, probably to denote in a special manner God's faithfulness to His promises.

7. *the prisoners*] Or, "those that are bound." The allusion is probably to the release from the Babylonian Captivity.

This is the first of five clauses, each beginning with "Jehovah," and, in common with the clauses preceding and following them, each consisting of three words, which is the favourite measure of the lines in the Book of Job.

The several works of mercy enumerated in these verses were combined in the personal ministry of our Lord. He gave food to the hungry (Matt. xiv. 15-21, xv. 32-38). He loosed those that were bound (Luke viii. 29 &c.). He opened the eyes of the blind (marg. ref.). He raised those that were bowed down (marg. ref.).

9. *relieveth*] Rather, *upholdeth or setteth upright*. The strangers, the widow, and the fatherless, who are combined in this place only in the Psalter, are the three special types of the needy and afflicted. The word "strangers," when found, as here, in the plural, and without the article, is generally used of the Israelites when in a foreign land.

he turneth upside down] Or, "turneth aside." The word in the original occurs very seldom in the Old Testament, and only in one other place in the Psalter (cxix. 78). It has been observed that whilst the works of God in providence and in grace are enumerated at length, His judicial administration occupies only one line: one of the numerous indications that whilst He "delights in mercy," judgment is His "strange work."

- ^a Ex. 15. 18. 10 ^p The LORD shall reign for ever,
 Ps. 10. 16. *Even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
 & 145. 13. Praise ye the LORD.
 Rev. 11. 15.

PSALM CXLVII.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD:
 For ^a*it is* good to sing praises unto our God;
^bFor *it is* pleasant; and ^cpraise is comely.
- 2 The LORD doth ^dbuild up Jerusalem:
^eHe gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 ^fHe healeth the broken in heart,
 And bindeth up their ¹wounds.
- 4 ^gHe telleth the number of the stars;
 He calleth them all by *their* names.
- 5 ^hGreat is our Lord, and of ²great power:
^kHis understanding is infinite.
- 6 ^lThe LORD lifteth up the meek:
 He casteth the wicked down to the ground.
- 7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;
 Sing praise upon the harp unto our God:
- 8 ^mWho covereth the heaven with clouds,
 Who prepareth rain for the earth,
 Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
- 9 ⁿHe giveth to the beast his food,
 And ^oto the young ravens which cry.
- 10 ^pHe delighteth not in the strength of the horse:
 He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.
- 11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
 In those that hope in his mercy.

¹ Heb. *griefts*.² Heb. *of his understanding there is no number*.

CXLVII. The liturgical character of this Psalm is clearly marked. It celebrates God's sovereign rule over His people, and His wisdom, His power, and His mercy, as displayed in the works of nature and of providence. This is one of the distinctive characteristics of those Psalms which were written subsequently to the Captivity, and is probably to be ascribed to the proofs recently given to the Israelites of the vanity of idols and the supreme majesty of Jehovah. More particularly this Psalm celebrates the power and goodness of God as displayed in the restoration of the people to their own land, and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. A comparison of *vv.* 1, 2, 7, and 12 with *Neh. xii. 27, 43* suggests the probability that the Psalm may have been composed and recited on the occasion there described.

The LXX. divide the Psalm into two parts, of which the second begins at *v.* 12.

It seems to have been composed either towards the beginning of the spring, or at the time of harvest.

1. Some prefer to render: "Praise ye Jehovah; for it is good: sing (or play upon an instrument) to our God, for it is pleasant; praise is comely."

2. *doth build up Jerusalem*] Rather, "is

the builder up of Jerusalem." The work was probably just completed.

the outcasts] Or "exiles." This is one of the many indications of the date of composition of this Psalm.

5. *His understanding is infinite*] Lit. "to His understanding there is no number." The phraseology of this and the preceding verse so closely resembles that of *Isai. xl. 26-29* that there can be little doubt that the words of the Prophet were in the mind of the Psalmist.

6. *lifteth up the meek*] Or, "setteth upright or firm the oppressed." The transition from Jehovah's omnipotence and omniscience, as displayed in the works of nature, to His providential care over His people, is similar to that in *cxlv. 13, 14*.

7. *Sing*] Lit. "answer," i.e. antiphonally (*cp. Exod. xv. 21*).

8. *Who maketh grass &c.*] Rather, "Who makes the mountains bring forth grass," i.e. without man's cultivation.

9. See *marg. ref.* The references to Job throughout this Psalm are numerous.

10. Carnal reliance generally is here rebuked. There is probably an allusion to cavalry and infantry, but there seems no direct reference to the prohibition against multiplying horses.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem;—praise thy God, O Zion.

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates;

He hath blessed thy children within thee.

14 ¹He maketh peace in thy borders,
And ²filleth thee with the ³finest of the wheat.

15 ⁴He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth:

His word runneth very swiftly.

16 ⁵He giveth snow like wool:

He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.

17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels:

Who can stand before his cold?

18 ⁶He sendeth out his word, and melteth them:

He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

19 ⁷He sheweth ⁸his word unto Jacob,

⁹His statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

20 ¹⁰He hath not dealt so with any nation:

And as for his judgments, they have not known them.

Praise ye the LORD.

⁹ Isai. 60.

17, 18.

⁷ Ps. 132, 15.

⁸ Job 37, 12.

Ps. 107, 20.

⁶ Job 37, 6.

¹⁰ ver. 15.

See Job 37.

10.

² Deut. 33.

2, 3, 4.

Ps. 76, 1.

& 78, 5.

& 103, 7.

⁷ Mal. 4, 4.

⁸ See Deut.

4, 32, 33, 34.

PSALM CXLVIII.

1 ¹PRAISE ye the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD from the heavens:

Praise him in the heights.

2 ²Praise ye him, all his angels:—praise ye him, all his hosts.

² Ps. 103.

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon:—praise him, all ye stars of light.

20, 21.

¹ Heb. *Who maketh thy border peace.*

² Heb. *fat of wheat.* Deut. 32, 14. Ps. 81, 16.

³ Heb. *his words.*

⁴ Heb. *Hallelujah.*

12. This strophe begins a new Psalm in the LXX., of which the subject is the peace and prosperity of the city of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel. The verb rendered "praise," or, rather, "praise aloud," is an unusual word in the Psalter.

13. The walls of the city were now rebuilt, and its gates duly closed and barred by night. See Neh. vii. 3.

14. Rather, as in the marg. As in v. 13 allusion is made to the security of the city, so in v. 14 allusion is made to the prosperity of the land; both Jerusalem and Zion having been summoned in v. 12 to unite in praising the Lord.

15. *He sendeth forth &c.]* Rather, "Who sendeth His commandments (to) the earth." Cp. Gen. i. 3.

16. *snow like wool]* The meaning may be either that the snow is like wool as to whiteness (cp. Isai. 55, 18); or, that the flakes of snow cover the earth like a woollen garment.

17. *his ice]* Rather, "His hail." The morsels or pieces seem to refer to the hail-stones or sleet.

18. *his word]* This is one of the passages in which the Word of Jehovah has been supposed to mean our Lord Jesus Christ. It seems more probable, however, that "word" here is equivalent to "command," as in v. 15.

19. *his word]* Those "lively oracles," in the possession of which the Jews had the

advantage over all the other nations of the earth (cp. Rom. iii. 1, 2).

CXLVIII. In this magnificent anthem, which exhibits in a striking manner the majesty and the wide compass, as well as the nationality, of the Hebrew worship, all creation, both in heaven and on earth, is summoned to unite in the praise of the Creator. The summons is a prophetic anticipation of Rom. viii. 18.

The Psalm is divided into two nearly equal parts, of which the former (vv. 1-6) relates to the heavenly, and the latter (vv. 7-12) to the earthly Hallelujah.

The points of connexion with the preceding and following Psalms are numerous. The key-note of the song of praise is struck in cxlv. 10, and the "works" of Jehovah there mentioned collectively, are here specified separately.

1. *from the heavens]* i.e. "O ye of the heavens!" The call to praise, instead of beginning from the earth and rising to heaven, begins with the higher sphere of creation, and is afterwards extended to our lower world.

2. *hosts]* Both the heavenly bodies and the Angels are represented in the Old Testament as "the hosts" of the Lord; but the parallelism suggests that the Angels are here primarily, if not exclusively, contemplated (cp. marg. ref.). In v. 3 the heavenly bodies are specified.

- ^b 1 K. 8. 27.
² Cor. 12. 2.
^c Gen. 1. 7.
^d Gen. 1. 1,
 6. 7.
^e Ps. 33. 6, 9.
^f Ps. 89. 37.
^g 119. 90, 91.
^h Jer. 31. 35,
 36.
ⁱ & 33. 25.
^j Isai. 43. 20.
^k Ps. 147.
^l 15-18.
^m Isai. 44. 23.
ⁿ & 49. 13.
^o & 55. 12.
^p Ps. 8. 1.
^q Isai. 12. 4.
^r Ps. 113. 4.
^s Ps. 75. 10.
^t Ps. 149. 9.
^u Eph. 2. 17.
- 4 Praise him, ^bye heavens of heavens,
 And ^cye waters that *be* above the heavens.
 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD:
 For ^dhe commanded, and they were created.
 6 ^eHe hath also established them for ever and ever:
 He hath made a decree which shall not pass.
 7 Praise the LORD from the earth,—^fye dragons, and all deeps:
 8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours;
 Stormy wind ^gfulfilling his word:
 9 ^hMountains, and all hills;—fruitful trees, and all cedars:
 10 Beasts, and all cattle;—creeping things, and ⁱflying fowl:
 11 Kings of the earth, and all people;
 Princes, and all judges of the earth:
 12 Both young men, and maidens;—old men, and children:
 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD:
 For ^jhis name alone is ^kexcellent;
^lHis glory *is* above the earth and heaven.
 14 ^mHe also exalteth the horn of his people,
ⁿThe praise of all his saints;
^oEven of the children of Israel, ^pa people near unto him.
 Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXLIX.

- ^a Ps. 33. 3.
^b Isai. 42. 10.
- 1 ^aPRAISE ye the LORD.—^aSing unto the LORD a new song,
 And his praise in the congregation of saints.

¹ Heb. *birds of wing.*

² Heb. *exalted.*

³ Heb. *Hallelujah.*

4. *heavens of heavens*] See lxviii. 33 note.

6. *he hath made a decree which shall not pass*] Some prefer "He gave them a decree, and not (one) transgresses (it)." The verb rendered "pass," when used in connexion with bounds or laws, seems to denote their transgression. God has engraven a law on all His works in nature which regulates their mutual relations, and none of them transgresses it.

7. *from the earth*] *i.e.* "O ye of the earth!" This corresponds to "from the heavens" in v. 1, and expresses the place from whence the praise is to proceed.

dragons] Any large water-animals. See Gen. i. 21 note.

8. The word rendered "fire" may here denote lightning (cp. cv. 32; Ex. xix. 18). The word rendered "vapours" commonly denotes "smoke" arising from fire, whether kindled in an ordinary manner (cxix. 83), or by lightning, or by volcanic or any other extraordinary agency. "Hail" and "snow" are of comparatively rare occurrence in Palestine.

9. *fruitful trees*] Rather, "fruit trees," as distinguished from trees of the forest, of which the cedar is the representative.

10. *Beasts, and all cattle*] *i.e.* Wild beasts, and domestic cattle.

11. In the invocation to praise Jehovah "from the heavens" the Psalmist began with the Angels, and ended with "the waters above the heavens" (vv. 1-4); now,

inversely, in the invocation to praise Jehovah "from the earth," he begins with the inanimate creation, and ends with man, the noblest of God's works.

13. *above the earth and heaven*] From both of which His praise is to proceed.

14. *He also exalteth the horn of his people*] Or, "And He hath raised (or lifted) up a horn for his people." Cp. Luke i. 69. During the period of the Captivity Israel had lost its "horn" or pre-eminence.

the praise of all his saints] These words may mean either that the Lord Himself is the praise of His people; or, more probably, that the restoration of the horn to His people is the occasion of praise, as in this Psalm, to all His saints. Cp. marg. ref.

a people near unto him] Lit. "the people of His nearness." It is in this capacity, as a people brought very near to Jehovah, that Israel, as represented in the person of the Psalmist, strikes the key-note in this Psalm of that song of praise in which all creation, animate and inanimate, shall hereafter join.

CXLIX. This Psalm appears to have been composed by the same writer as the other Psalms of this Hallelujah series. This Psalm, like those passages in which mention is made of "a new song" (v. 1; see xcvi. 1 note), has reference to the days of the Messiah, and to His final victories over all opposing foes.

When this Psalm is compared with the

- 2 Let Israel rejoice in ¹him that made him :
 Let the children of Zion be joyful in their 'King.
- 3 ^aLet them praise his name ¹in the dance :
 Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.
- 4 For 'the LORD taketh pleasure in his people :
 'He will beautify the meek with salvation.
- 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory :
 Let them ⁹sing aloud upon their beds.
- 6 Let the high praises of God be ²in their mouth,
 And ^aa twoedged sword in their hand ;
- 7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen,
 And punishments upon the people ;
- 8 To bind their kings with chains,
 And their nobles with fetters of iron ;
- 9 'To execute upon them the judgment written :
^aThis honour have all his saints.
 Praise ye the LORD.

^b Ps. 100. 3.^c Zech. 9. 9.^d Matt. 21. 6.^e Ps. 81. 2.^f 150. 4.^g Ps. 35. 27.^h Ps. 132. 16.ⁱ Job 35. 10.^k Heb. 4. 12.

Rev. 1. 16.

^l Deut. 7.1. 2.^m Ps. 143. 14.¹ Or, with the pipe.² Heb. in their throat.

parallel prophecies of Isaiah, and of the Apocalypse, the difficulty which exists in its interpretation will be greatly diminished, if not removed ; and its reference will appear to be to those signal judgments, foretold alike in the Old and in the New Testament, which will usher in the coming of the great day of the Lord, when His enemies must perish at His Presence, and His "people shall be willing in the day of His power."

1. *a new song*] See xxxiii. 3 note. The period of the restoration, an event which stirred the deepest emotions of the nation, was one, though perhaps the least remarkable, of the epochs of the revival of the lyric poetry of the Hebrews.

saints] Cp. cxlviii. 14 ; one of the connecting links with the preceding Psalm. The word occurs three times in this Psalm. The harps (*v.* 3) which had long hung upon the willows of Babylon were once more employed in the liturgical worship of the rebuilt Temple.

2. *him that made him*] Lit. "his Makers" (a plural number, as in Job xxxv. 10 ; Isai. liv. 5). The word seems to refer rather to the selection and constitution of Israel as the people of Jehovah, than to the act of creation. By the restoration from Babylon, Israel had been appropriated anew in this special character.

in their King] The Theocratic king no longer existed, and the Lord their God had become again their King (Deut. xxxiii. 5 ; 1 S. xii. 12).

3. *the dance*] The Hebrew word (understood by some as in the marg.) is used specially with reference to the sacred dance (cp. xxx. 11 note ; Judg. xi. 34, xxi. 21). In the prophecy of the restoration from the Captivity in Jeremiah xxx. and xxxi., the annunciation of the vengeance which was about to be executed upon the wicked is

connected, as in this Psalm, with the joy and exultation of Israel.

Let them sing praises] Rather, "let them play upon an instrument."

4. *He will beautify &c.*] In the sense of making glorious the oppressed (or afflicted) with deliverance. The verb occurs in no other place in the Psalter. It is chiefly used by Isaiah ("glorified" in lv. 5, lx. 9).

5. *Let the saints be joyful in glory*] i.e. the glory conferred upon them, or promised to them (cp. Hag. ii. 9). In the place of "howling upon their beds" (Hos. vii. 14), God now gives to them songs "upon their beds" (marg. ref.).

6. *the high praises*] Lit. "the exaltations," a word not used elsewhere. The words "a two-edged sword" are more literally "a sword of mouths," i.e. edges. Cp. Neh. iv. 17.

7. *the heathen... the people*] Rather, "the nations... the peoples."

9. "The judgment (or decree) written" may look back, in the first instance, to the sentence of extermination pronounced on the Canaanites ; but it seems to refer, not so much to any one particular passage, as to the immutable decree of God, registered in heaven, and thus "written before Him" (cp. Isai. lxxv. 6), and expressed also in the whole of the prophecies, more especially those of Isaiah (e.g. xlv. 14, lx. 2, 3, 11, lix. 16-19), which predict the universal dominion of Jehovah, and the complete subjugation of His adversaries, in connexion with the glory and exaltation of Israel.

This honour have all his saints] This clause may mean either (1) "He (the Lord) is a (or the) honour of all His saints ;" i.e. He, Who at His first coming had "no form nor comeliness" (the same word which is here rendered "honour"), will become the honour of His saints when He shall come again to exalt them, and to take vengeance

PSALM CL.

- 1 ¹ PRAISE ye the LORD.—Praise God in his sanctuary :
 Praise him in the firmament of his power.
 2 ² Praise him for his mighty acts :
 Praise him according to his excellent ³ greatness.
 3 Praise him with the sound of the ² trumpet :
 Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
 4 Praise him ⁴ with the timbrel and ³ dance :
 Praise him with ⁵ stringed instruments and organs.
 5 Praise him upon the loud ⁵ cymbals :
 Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
 6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.
 Praise ye the LORD.

^a Ps. 145.

⁵, 6.

^b Deut. 3. 21.

^c Ps. 81. 2.

& 149. 3.

^d Ex. 15. 20.

^e Ps. 33. 2.

& 92. 3.

& 144. 9.

Isai. 38. 20.

^f 1 Chr. 15.

10, 19, 28.

& 16. 5.

& 25. 1, 6.

¹ Heb. *Hallelujah*.

² Or, *cornet*, Ps. 98. 6.

³ Or, *pipe*, Ps. 149. 3.

upon their adversaries; or (2) "it is an honour to all His saints;" i.e. the destruction of their adversaries, and their own deliverance, will become a crown of glory to the people of the Lord. Cp. cxlviii. 14 note. The latter interpretation seems to be in keeping with marg. ref. The victories of their King reflect glory on all His faithful and devoted servants.

CL. As each of the five books of the Psalter ends with its doxology (see p. 94), so the entire "Book of Praises" ends with this magnificent song of thanksgiving, in which not only the people of Israel with all their national instrumental music, but the whole of the animate creation, "every thing that hath breath," is summoned to unite.

This universal Hallelujah forms the most suitable conclusion to a Book in which cries from the deep are, throughout, blended with songs of praise; in other words, which describes the experience of God's people throughout the whole of the various vicissitudes of their earthly history.

1. *in his sanctuary*] If the Sanctuary here denotes the earthly Temple of Jehovah, this verse may be regarded as a short summary of Ps. cxlviii. If the heavenly Sanctuary be denoted (as in xi. 4), we must consider the summons to praise as addressed to the angelic hosts. The word may, however, be rendered "for," or "on account of, His holiness" (see lx. 6 note).

in the firmament of his power] i.e. Where His might and majesty are displayed.

2. *his mighty acts*] As e.g. the Exodus, the restoration from Babylon, and, finally, the ultimate deliverance foretold in the preceding Psalm.

according to his excellent greatness] Rather, "according to the abundance of His greatness."

3. *sound of the trumpet*] Or, "blast of the horn," i.e. the curved ram's horn, as distinguished from the straight silver trumpet (see Numb. x. 2 note).

4. The "timbrel," or tambourine, was the chief instrumental accompaniment of the dance. The word rendered "dance" is taken by some as in the marg.

and organs] Rather, "and pipe."

5. *loud cymbals...high sounding cymbals*] Rather, "cymbals of clear sound...cymbals of loud noise." The latter word seems to denote a loud sound as of an alarm or signal trumpet, as in Lev. xxv. 9 and Numb. xxxi. 6.

6. *every thing that hath breath*] Lit. "the whole of breath," i.e. all living beings. Cp. Gen. ii. 7; Deut. xx. 16; Josh. x. 40. The last verse of the Psalter is a summons addressed no longer to Israel only, but to the whole of the creation, human and animate, to unite in the praise of Jehovah.

PROVERBS.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE opening words of the Book (i. 1) give us its current Hebrew title; of which the first word has been adopted by translators, and "Proverbs" has become in the LXX., the Vulgate, and the Authorized Version, the common heading of the Book. At one time a title of honour, the Book of Wisdom, or the "all-excellent wisdom," was applied by both Jews and Christians to this Book, indicating that the Book took its place, as the representative of the Wisdom of which the Hebrews thought so much, at the head of the whole class of books, Canonical or Apocryphal, which were known as Sapiential.

The Hebrew word for "proverb" (*mashâl*) has a much more definite significance than the Greek *παροιμία*, and the Latin *proverbium*. Its root-meaning is that of comparison, the putting this and that together, noting likeness in things unlike; it answers, *i.e.*, to the Greek *παραβολή* rather than *παροιμία*. That it was applied also to moral apophthegms of varying length, pointed and pithy in their form, even though there might be no similitude, is evident enough throughout the Book.¹

Proverbs are characteristic of a comparatively early stage in the mental growth of most nations. A single startling or humorous fact serving as the type of all similar facts (*e.g.* 1 S. x. 12); the mere result of an induction to which other instances may be referred (*e.g.* 1 S. xxiv. 13); a law, with or without a similitude, or explaining in this manner the course of events in the lives of men or in the history of their nation (Jer. xxxi. 29; Ezek. xviii. 2):—these things furnish proverbs found in the history of all nations, generally in its earlier stages. There is little or no record of their birth. No one knows their author. They find acceptance with men from their inherent truth or semblance of truth. Afterwards, commonly at a much later period, men make collections of them.

2. The Book of Proverbs, however, is not such a collection. So far as it includes what had previously been current in familiar sayings, there was a process of selection, guided by a distinct didactic aim, excluding all that were local, personal, or simply humorous, and receiving those which

¹ The word has sometimes a more extended meaning. Discourses of more or less poetic character, without formal comparison, and with no didactic result, are, as in the case of that of Balaam (Num. xxiii. 7, 18, xxiv. 3, 15, 20, 21, 23), and

Job (xxvii. 1, xxix. 1), and Ezekiel (xvii. 2, xx. 49, xxiv. 3), described as "parables." The triumph-song of Num. xxi. 27-30, uttered by those who "speak in proverbs," serves as another instance of the wider meaning.

fell in with the ethical purpose of the teacher. As in the history of other nations, so among the Hebrews (cp. 1 K. iv. 31), there rose up, at a certain stage of culture, those to whom the proverb was the most natural mode of utterance, who embodied in it all that they had observed or thought out as to the phenomena of nature or of human life. Such pre-eminently was the sage to whose authorship the Book of Proverbs is assigned, Solomon, the son of David.

The definite precision of 1 K. iv. 32 leads to the inference that there was at the time when that Book was written a known collection of sayings ascribed to Solomon far longer than the present Book, and of songs which are almost, or altogether, lost to us. The scope of that collection may probably have included a far wider range of subjects (such as trees, creatures, &c.), than the present Book, which is from first to last ethical in its scope, deals but sparingly, through the larger portion of its contents, with the world of animals and plants, and has nothing that takes the form of fable.

3. The structure of the Book shews, however, that it is a compilation from different sources as well as a selection from the sayings of one man only; and a compilation which, in its present form, was made some three centuries after the time of Solomon. One considerable section of the book consists of proverbs that were first arranged and written out under Hezekiah (xxv. 1). Agur (xxx. 1) and Lemuel (xxx. 1) are named as the authors of the last two chapters. The Book is, therefore, analogous in its composition to the Psalms; it is an anthology from

the sayings of the sages of Israel, taking its name from him who was the chiefest of them, as the Book of Psalms is an anthology from the hymns not of David only, but of the sons of Korah and others.

The question how far the Book gives us the teaching of Solomon himself, what portions of it may be assigned to him, and what to some later writers, has been very differently answered: but certain landmarks present themselves, dividing the Book into sections, each of which is a complete whole.

(a) i. 1-6; the title and introduction to the Book, describing its contents and aim. There seems good reason for believing that while *v. 1* gave the original title of the Book, the other verses were added by the last compiler, in whose hands it took its present shape.

(b) i. 7; something of a motto, laying down the principle which is the basis of the whole Book. This may be assigned to the same compiler.

(c) i. 8-ix. 18; one long exhortation, addressed by the teacher to his scholar, and each sub-section opening with the words, "my son" or "my children." In ch. viii. there is a change to a higher strain. Wisdom herself speaks, and not to the individual seeker, but to the sons of men at large (viii. 4). This personification of Wisdom as a living power, and the stress laid upon her greatness and beauty, contrasted with the "strange woman," the "foreigner," *i.e.*, the harlot or adulteress, whose fascination is most perilous to the soul entering on its time of trial, are the characteristic features of this portion.

The whole of this section has

been ascribed by some commentators to a later author than Solomon, on grounds which are, to say the least, very uncertain.² Arguments, in favour of identity of authorship, are not wanting.³

(d) x. 1-xxii. 16. The title indicates that the section had an independent origin. The continuous teaching is replaced by a series of isolated maxims, short, pithy, antithetic, the true type of the Hebrew proverbs, hardly ever carried beyond the limits of a single verse, dealing with the common facts of life, and viewing them from the point of prudence. This is the kernel of the whole Book, representing the wisdom which made Solomon famous among men. Containing about 400 of these maxims, it may be thought of as probably a selection from the larger number referred to in 1 K. iv. 32, made

possibly under the direction of the king himself, and prefaced by the more homiletic teachings of chs. i.-ix. Though there is no systematic order, here and there two or more verses in succession deal with the same topic⁴ in a way which throws some light on the process by which the selection had been made, as though there had been something like a commonplace book, in which, though there was no systematic arrangement, there was a certain degree of grouping under different heads or catchwords. Certain phrases too are characteristic of this section.⁵ As regards the substance of the teaching; stress is laid⁶ on the thought that Jehovah, the "Lord," is the supreme Giver of all good, the Judge and Ruler of mankind, all-knowing, and ordering all things; that the king, thought of in the ideal

² (1) It has been inferred from *e.g.* x. 1, that the compiler wished to indicate that chs. i.-ix. were by another writer; an inference thought to be confirmed by the contrast between the styles of writing. (2) The warnings (*e.g.* i. 10 &c.) against the life of robbers as a besetting danger for the young are affirmed to point to a time of greater disorder than the reign of Solomon. (3) New words or forms are alleged to fall in with the same theory. (4) Traces of the influence of the Book of Job are adduced to place the composition of this portion after the beginning of the seventh century, to which the Book of Job is referred.

To which it may be answered: (1) The difference of style is not greater than would be natural in one who in maturer age was writing a preface to maxims which had been noted down separately from time to time. (2) The life of the outlaw was one of constant recurrence in the earlier history of Israel (*e.g.* Judg. ix. 4), and there is no ground for supposing that it was entirely suppressed under Solomon. (3) The argument from peculiar words, always more or less fallacious, is traversed by the far larger number of words, which are common in nearly the same proportion to all parts of the Book. (4) The uncertainty as to the date of Job

makes any argument based upon it of very doubtful weight.

³ (1) There are no warnings against idolatry, such as would have been natural in one who lived under the later kings of Judah; (2) the danger of contamination from foreign vices was precisely that which began to be felt under Solomon; (3) the forms of luxury, described in vii. 16, 17, are such as were conspicuous in his reign (1 K. x. 28).

⁴ *E.g.* x. 6 and 7, 8 and 9, 13 and 14, 16 and 17, 18 and 19, xi. 25 and 26, 30 and 31, and especially the recurrence of the name "Jehovah," xv. 33, xvi. 1-9, 11, and of the word "king" in xvi. 10, 12-15.

⁵ *E.g.* the "fountain" or "well of life" (x. 11, xiii. 14, xiv. 27, xvi. 22), the "tree of life" (xi. 30, xiii. 12, xv. 4), the "snares of death" (xiii. 14, xiv. 27), the "destruction" that follows upon evil-doing (x. 14, 15, xiii. 3, xiv. 28, xviii. 7), the use of a peculiar word for "speaking" or "uttering" either truth or falsehood (xii. 17, xiv. 5, 25, xix. 5, 9), of another for "perverting" or "overthrowing" (xiii. 6, xix. 3, xxii. 12), the use of a peculiar form of an unusual verb for "meddling" (xvii. 14, xviii. 1, xx. 3, and nowhere else in the Old Testament), &c.

⁶ Especially in xv. 3, 8, 9, 11, 16, 25, 26, 29, 33, and xvi. 1-7, 9, 11, 33.

greatness which was natural in the time of Solomon, and hardly so at a later period, was as the counterpart and representative of Jehovah, an earthly Providence (xvi. 10-15, xix. 6, 12, xx. 8, 26, 28, xxi. 1).

(e) xxii. 17-xxiv. 22: a section containing the more continuous teaching, the personal address, of the teacher to his "son" (xxiii. 15, 19, 26, xxiv. 13, 21), the same warnings against sins of impurity (xxiii. 27, 28), the same declaration of the end which the teacher has in view (xxii. 17-21), as are met with in chs. i-ix. It may seem a natural hypothesis that the same writer, having made the selection which forms the central portion of the book, wrote both prologue and epilogue to it, and that this, with the short section (f), was the form in which the Book was current until it received its last additions in the reign of Hezekiah.

(f) xxiv. 23-34: a section with a new title. "These things also belong to the wise," i.e. are spoken by them, fulfil the promise of the title (i. 6) that it would include the "words of the wise," wherever the compiler found them. Short as the section is, it presents in the parable of the field of the slothful (xxiv. 30-34) some characteristic features not to be found in the other portions of the Book. What had been spoken before barely and briefly (vi. 9) is now reproduced with pictorial vividness. What was before a general maxim, becomes sharper and more pointed as a lesson of experience.

(g) xxv.—xxix. 27. The superscription of this section presupposes the existence of a previous collection, known as the Proverbs of Solomon, and recognized as at

once authentic and authoritative. It shews that there were also current, orally, or in writing; other proverbs not included in that collection. It brings before us a marked instance of the activity of that period in collecting, arranging, and editing the writings of an earlier age. It is a distinct statement, that both the collection that precedes, and that which follows, were at that time, after careful inquiry, recognized to be by Solomon himself. The chapters to which it is prefixed present a general resemblance to the portion (x.—xxii. 16) which all critics have regarded as the oldest portion of the Book. There is the same stress laid on the ideal excellence of the kingly office (cp. xxv. 2-7 with xvi. 10-15), the same half-grouping under special words and thoughts.⁷ The average length of the proverbs is about the same, in most there is the same general parallelism of the clauses. There is a freer use of direct similitudes. In one passage (xxvii. 23-27) there is, as an exceptional case, instruction which seems to be economic rather than ethical in its character, designed, it may be, to uphold the older agricultural life of the Israelites as contrasted with the growing tendency to seek wealth by commerce, and so fall into the luxury and profligacy of the Phœnicians.

(h) xxx, xxxi. These two chapters present problems of greater difficulty, and open a wider field for conjecture. The word trans-

⁷ E.g. in xxv. 2-7 referring to kings, in the words "take away" (xxv. 4, 5), in the use of the same word (in Hebrew) for "strife," or "cause" (xxv. 9), of "gold" (xxv. 11, 12), of the "fool" in the first twelve verses of ch. xxvi., of the "slothful" in xxvi. 13-16, of the "righteous" in xxix. 2, 7, 13.

lated "prophecy" ⁸ (xxx. 1, xxxi. 1; *massa*) is elsewhere, with scarcely an exception, rendered "burden," either in its literal sense, or, as denoting a solemn speech or oracle, uttered by a Prophet (cp. the titles of Isaiah xiii.-xxiii.). If this meaning be received here, it indicates a marked difference between these chapters and the hortative addresses, or the collections of apophthegms of which, up to this time, the Book had been composed.⁹

The "prophecy" is addressed to two disciples, Ithiel (cp. Neh. xi. 7) and Ucal. Some take these names to be two ideal names, the first meaning "God is with me," and the second "I am strong," both names of the same ideal person, the representative of a Divine wisdom, meeting (vv. 4, 5) the confession of ignorance and blindness. By others the words are treated as not being names at all, but part of the opening words of Agur himself, the introduction to the strange complaint, or confession, which opens so abruptly (v. 2).

The leading features of the section are less didactic, more enigmatic in character, as though it corresponded specially to the "dark sayings" of i. 6. The phenomena are grouped into quaternions, and show a strange inter-

mingling of facts belonging to the brute and to the human world; in this, whensoever and by whomsoever written, shewing the influence of the Book of Job as clearly as the earlier sections did. Probably, the section is a fragment of a work written by one belonging originally to the country to which many critics have been led to refer the Book of Job itself, a proselyte to the faith which the occurrence of the name Jehovah (v. 9) proves that the writer had received. The reign of Hezekiah was conspicuous for the re-opening of intercourse with these neighbouring nations (2 Chr. xxxii. 23), for the admission of converts from them among the citizens of Zion (Pa. lxxxvii.), and for the zeal shown in collecting and adding to the canon whatever bore upon it the stamp of a lofty and heavenly wisdom.

(i) xxxi. 1-9. Most Jewish and some Patristic commentators have conjectured that Lemuel is a name for Solomon, and that the words of his mother's reproof were spoken when the first promise of his reign was beginning to pass into sensuality and excess; others have suggested that Lemuel is simply an ideal name, he who is "for God," the true king who leads a life consecrated to the service of Jehovah. We must be

⁸ The Vulgate in both passages gives "visio." The LXX. substitutes an entirely different verse for xxx. 1, and in xxxi. 1 gives χρηματισμός.

⁹ Some have maintained that allusion is here made to a "land" of Massa (Gen. xxv. 14; 1 Chr. i. 30); that its inhabitants were among the "children of the East," whose wisdom had become proverbial (1 K. iv. 30); and that their words were therefore thought worthy of being appended to those of the sage by whom they were surpassed. With the help of some

changes in the vowel-points of the original, xxx. 1 is transformed into "Agur the son of her to whom Massa is obedient," i.e. the queen of Massa; and xxxi. 1 appears as "The words of (or "for") Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him." Agur and Lemuel are thus made out to be brothers, and the queen is made the possessor of a wisdom which places her on a level with the queen of the South, or with the son of David himself. The hypothesis is ingenious rather than satisfying.

content to confess our ignorance who Lemuel was, and what was the occasion of the "prophecy." It probably belongs to the same period as ch. xxx. and was added to the Book not earlier than the time of Hezekiah.

(j) xxxi. 10-31. The last portion of the Book forms, more distinctly, perhaps, than any other, a complete whole in itself. From beginning to end there is but one subject, the delineation of a perfect wife. The section is alphabetic in its structure. The form may have been adopted, as in the case of the alphabetic Psalms, partly as a help to memory, partly from the delight which, in certain stages, generally comparatively late in the history of literature, is felt in choosing a structure which presents difficulties and requires ingenuity to overcome them. The absence of any historical allusions makes it impossible to fix any precise date for it.

4. The ethical teaching of the Book of Proverbs rests on principles which have their application to the varying circumstances of life.

The Book belongs to a period when men had been taught to see more clearly than before the relative importance of the moral and the ceremonial precepts which seemed, in the Law of Moses, to stand on the same level as enjoined by Divine authority. The language of Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 22), of Asaph (Ps. l. 13, 14), of David (Ps. li. 16, 17), had impressed itself on the minds of the people at large, and on one who, like the writer of the Book of Proverbs, had grown up under the immediate influence of the teacher (Nathan) who, after the death of Samuel, stood at the

head of the prophetic order. The tendency to discriminate between moral and positive obligations thus originated, would be fostered by intercourse with other Semitic nations, such as Edom and Sheba, standing on the same footing as regards the fundamental principles of ethics, but not led, as Israel had been, through the discipline of typical or symbolic ordinances. If the Book of Job was already known to the Israelite seekers after wisdom, the grandeur of its thoughts and the absence in it of any reference to the Law as such, would strengthen the conviction that instruction might be given, leading to a life of true wisdom and holiness and yet not including any direct reference to ceremonial or ritual precepts. These would be preserved in the traditions of household life, the example of parents, the teaching of priests and Levites; while a teacher such as the writer of the Book of Proverbs could aim at laying the foundation of a godly life independently of them, and exhibit that life in its completeness.

This accounts for the absence from the Proverbs of all mention of obligations on which devout Israelites at all times must have laid stress, and to which Pharisaism in its later developments gave an exaggerated prominence.¹

It was this negative characteristic which fitted the Book to do a

¹ There is no reference to the law of the Sabbath, nor to the payment of tithes, nor to the observance of the Passover and other Feasts. What is true of the Book of Job, that, with the exception of the frequent occurrence of Jehovah as the distinctive name of God, it contains but little that would indicate any knowledge of the Law, or an Israelitish origin, is true, to nearly the same extent, here.

work which could not otherwise have been done so well, both for the education of Israel, and for that of mankind at large. The Jew was to be taught to recognize a common ground on which he and they alike stood (Mark xii. 33). The Greek, when the sacred books of Israel were brought before him in his own language, could find in such a Book as Proverbs, that which he could understand and sympathize with,—teaching as to life and its duties, vices and their penalties, not unlike that which he found in his own literature. It was significant of the attractive power which this Book exercised on the minds of men during the period between the Old and New Testaments, when there was no “open vision,” and the gift of prophecy was for a time withdrawn, that the two most prominent books in the collection which we know as the Apocrypha, the only two, indeed, that have a marked didactic character, the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus, were based upon its model, and to a large extent reproduced its precepts.

The teaching of the Book of Proverbs was, however, in its essence, identical with that which formed the basis of the faith of Israel. Its morality was not merely the result of a wide observation of the consequences of good and evil conduct, but was essentially religious. The constant occurrence of the Divine name in the form (Jehovah), which was the characteristic inheritance of Israel, and which is more frequently used than that of God (*Elohim*), is in itself a sufficient proof that there was no surrender of the truth of which that name was the symbol.

The fear of Jehovah (i. 7) stood in the very front of its teaching as the beginning of wisdom. The temper thus indicated, that of awe and reverence, rooted in the consciousness of man's littleness and weakness in the presence of the Eternal and the Infinite, was at once the motive and the crown (ii. 5) of the life of obedience to the laws of duty which the teaching of the Book enjoins. If outward prosperity, “length of days,” and “riches and honour” (iii. 16, x. 27), attach to those who keep His commandments, men are taught also that He educates and trains them by “chastening” and “correction” (iii. 11, 12). All powers of intellect and speech, all efforts after holiness, are thought of as His gifts (xvi. 1, 9), even as men are taught to recognize His bounty in all the outward blessings of their lives, and in the family relationships which make up the happiness of home (xix. 14). When men are told to seek wisdom, they are led on to think of it as clothed with a personal life, in closest fellowship with the Eternal, inseparably one with Him (viii. 22, 30). And as the wisdom which the Book inculcates is thus raised far above the level of earthly prudence, so also the reward is more than outward prosperity. “Righteousness delivereth from death” (xi. 4), turns, *i.e.*, the inevitable end of life into an euthanasia. In contrast with the wicked, of whom it is true that “when he dieth his expectation shall perish” (xi. 7), it is written of the righteous that he “hath hope in his death” (xiv. 32).

5. The application of these principles to practical and social life presupposes a state of society in

which the simplicity of village life is giving way to the sudden development of the wealth and luxury which belong to cities. The dangers against which the young are warned with oft-repeated earnestness are those of extravagance, indebtedness, drunkenness, impurity leading to open lawlessness, and the life of the freebooter. Other faults incident to different temperaments are each, in their turn, held up to reprobation.² With the practical wisdom which is characteristic of the Book, appealing, as it does, to those that are halting between two opinions, and inclining to the worse, stress is laid not chiefly on the sin but on the folly of the vice, not on its eternal, but its temporal consequences. Men are urged to act first from secondary, prudential motives, to shun the poverty, wretchedness, ignominy, which are the consequences of self-indulgence, that so they may learn the habits of self-restraint which will make them capable of higher thoughts, and obedient to the Divine Law, as finding in that obedience itself their exceeding great reward. The remedies for these evils the writer or writers of the Book of Proverbs saw were to be found in education. Individuals and nations alike needed discipline and restraint. Individuals would find this in the training of home, in the counsels, warnings, and, if necessary, the chastisements also, by which the unruly will is checked and guided; nations, in the stern, inflexible, incorruptible administration of jus-

tice controlled by a wise and righteous king (xvi. 10, 12-14, xx. 8, 26, 28). Hence kings are counselled no less than subjects (xxviii. 16, xxix. 12, xxxi. 4): the king is advised not to rely too much on his own unaided judgment, but to surround himself with wise and prudent counsellors (xxiv. 6), and to refer all to that wisdom, which is the gift of God (viii. 15).

No ethical manual would be complete, unless it assigned a to woman, as well as man, her right position in the social order. From her folly (xi. 22) and degradation (ii. 16-19, v. 3-14, vii. 6-27) spring the worst evils; in her excellence is the crown and glory of a man's life (xi. 16, xii. 4). No picture of ideal happiness is brighter than that of a home which is thus made perfect with the clear brightness of true union (v. 15-20). The "prudent wife" is thought of as one of God's best gifts (xix. 14), "building her house" (xiv. 1) on the only true foundation. Her influence on her children is as great as that of their father, if not greater (i. 8, vi. 20). They owe what they have of goodness to her loving persuasion. Their sins and follies are a heaviness and reproach to her (x. 1, xvii. 25). They are bound to render to her a true and loving obedience (i. 8, vi. 20). The teaching on this subject culminates in ch. xxxi., consisting as it does, (1) of prophecy, or oracular speech as to the office of a king and the special temptations incident to it, which comes from one who was herself the mother of a king, and (2) of the picture of a perfect wife, wise, active, liberal, large-hearted, the ideal which the young man, seeking for the true blessedness of life, was to keep in view.

² *E.g.* idleness (xv. 19, xix. 15, 24, xxiv. 30-34, xxvi. 13-16), pride (xvi. 18, xviii. 12), uncontrolled speech (x. 10, 16, xviii. 7), want of reverence for parents and for the aged (xiii. 1, xv. 5, xix. 26).

6. The LXX., or Greek Version of the Book of Proverbs, presents several points of interest. What was true of the LXX. translation as a whole, that it seemed to bridge over the chasm that had divided the Jew from the Greek, holds good in a special degree of this part of it. In making that translation the Jew would have to familiarize himself with the terminology of Greek ethical writers, and to note the precise equivalents for the attributes, moral and intellectual, of which the Book treats so fully. In reading it the Greek would find himself, far more than he would in reading Law or Psalm or Prophet, on common ground on which he and the Jew could meet. The very words with which the Greek version of the Book abounds, such as *σοφία*, *φρόνησις*, *σύνεσις*, *δικαιοσύνη*, were those which were echoing in every lecture-room in Alexandria. As the Book itself, according to its traditional authorship, was the first-fruits of that largeness of heart which admitted intercourse with other nations and familiarity with their modes of thought and speech, so the translation tended to give prominence to that side of Judaism in which it presented itself to men, not as prophetic, typical, ceremonial, but wholly or chiefly as a monotheistic system of pure ethics.

Hence this Book, almost alone of the Books of the Old Testament, served as a model for the Hellenistic writers of the two centuries B.C. The Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach or the son of Sirach (cp. the prologue), probably also other lost books of the same kind, confessed in their very titles, yet more in their whole structure and tone, that the Pro-

verbs of Solomon (especially ch. viii.) had left their stamp upon them.

Philo's language, descriptive of the Logos,³ is a reflection of the Greek words in which Wisdom is personified.⁴ In the teaching of St. John, may be traced, in the highest aspects of Christian theology, the influence of the vivid portraiture of the personified *Σοφία* of the Proverbs.⁵

It lay in the nature of the case, both as to the thoughts of Philo, and yet more as to the higher teaching of St. John, that, so far as the Divine Wisdom was personified, the masculine, not the feminine, word should gain the ascendancy. A system in which *Σοφία* had been the dominant word might have led to an earlier development of that attractive power of the "ever-feminine," of which Mariolatry was a later growth; or might have become one in which, as in the Rabbinic exegesis of Prov. viii., Wisdom was identified with the Law given by Moses, and yet existing before the world was.

An instance, hardly less striking,

³ Μιμούμενος τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς ὁδοὺς, πρὸς παραδείγματα ἀρχόντων ἐκείνων βλέπων.—Philo, "De Conf. Ling." III. 342.

⁴ Ὃς ἰσχυρὰ ἐποίει τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς ἡμῶν παρ' αὐτῷ ἀρμόζουσα· ἐγὼ ἡμῶν ἢ προσέχαιρην, καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ εὐφρανόμεν ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ.—viii. 29, 30.

⁵ The phrases which came to express the eternal generation of the Λόγος as the μονογενὴς υἱὸς (John i. 14, 18), such, e.g., as πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος, ἐν ἀρχῇ, were used of her. The doxology which ascribes to the Lamb that was slain πλουτὸν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχύον καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν (Rev. v. 12) is all but an echo of the words in which Wisdom speaks of herself (ἐμὴ φρόνησις, ἐμὴ δὲ ἰσχύς... παλαιὸς καὶ δόξα ἐμοὶ ὑπάρχει, viii. 14, 18). Even the ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν of John i. 14 can hardly be separated altogether from the ἐγὼ ἡ σοφία, κατεσκήνωσα βουλήν καὶ γνώσιν of Prov. viii. 12.

of the influence exercised by the teaching of the Greek Version is seen in Luke xi. 49. If our Lord was speaking of Himself as *ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ* that sent its Prophets and Apostles into the world and sent them in vain, then we have a direct indication that He sought to lead His disciples to identify Him with the personal Wisdom of whom such great things are said in Prov. viii., and who utters a like complaint (Prov. i. 20-33). If, however, the Wisdom of God be taken as the title of some lost book, the inference is that the teaching of the Book of Proverbs had impressed itself so deeply on the minds of the Jews of Palestine no less than on those of Alexandria as to give rise there also to a "Sapiential" literature in which Wisdom appeared as the sender of those Apostles and Prophets, on whom, as its foundation, the Church was to be built. If, further, we take in the thought that our Lord's representations of His work, as they were determined, on one side, by the Messianic language of Isaiah, were influenced, on another, by the teaching of chs. viii., ix., the invitation in ix. 5 may be the source from whence flowed the deeper parable of John vi. and of the Last Supper; the "house" which Wisdom built, with its *στυλοὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ὄρει* (ix. 1), the starting-point of the thought that the Church is the "house of God" (1 Tim. iii. 15), "built" upon the rock (Matt. xvi. 18) of the Apostles as the *στυλοὶ* of that house (Gal. ii. 9; 1 Tim. iii. 15); and the feast which she prepared (ix. 2, 3) the origin of the parable of the Wedding Feast.

Thus, also, may be explained the stress which St. Paul lays on

the fact that Christ Jesus *ἐγενήθη ἡμῖν σοφία ἀπὸ θεοῦ* (1 Cor. i. 30), that He is *θεοῦ σοφία* (1 Cor. i. 24), that in Him are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). Its influence on Patristic theology is shewn by the prominence given to Prov. viii. 22 (see note) throughout the Arian controversy; and more remote after-growths of the Greek version of this book, may be noted in the Ahamoth, or *Σοφία*, of the Gnostic systems of Basilides and Valentinus, in the church dedicated by Constantine to the Divine Wisdom, in the retention of that name by Justinian when he built the temple which, as the Mosque of Santa Sophia, still attracts the admiration of Christendom, and lastly, in the commonness of the personal name Sophia, the only one of its class that has become popular, while others, such as Irene, Agape, Pistis, Dikaio-syne, have fallen almost or altogether into oblivion.

The direct use of the Book of Proverbs in the New Testament presents some peculiar features. Quotations from it are not very numerous, and are brought in, not with such words as *γέγραπται*, *ἡ γραφή λέγει*, or as coupled with the name of Solomon, but as current and familiar sayings, as if the Book had been used generally in education and its maxims impressed upon the memory. In almost all cases the quotations are from the LXX. Version, in some instances even where it differs widely from the Hebrew. It will be worth while, as the circumstances just mentioned often hinder the quotations or allusive references from attracting the attention of the English reader, to refer to some, at least,

of 'the more striking examples in parallel columns.⁶

The familiarity of the New Testament writers with the Greek version of the Book is, however, shewn in other ways. Over and above their use of the same ethical terminology (*σοφία, σύνεσις, φρόνησις, ἐπιγνώσις θεοῦ, αἴσθησις*), its influence is to be traced in their choice of a word which occupies a prominent position in the vocabulary of Christianity. In Proverbs prophetic stress is laid on the *φόβος θεοῦ* as the *ἀρχὴ σοφίας*, the groundwork of all virtues: the word occurs thirteen times, to say nothing of the parallel passages in Pss. xix. 9, xxxiv. 11, cxi. 10. It might have been expected that it would be found not less prominent in the teaching of the New Testament. There, however, it is found but seldom (Acts ix. 31; 2 Cor. v. 11; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. v. 21). It is not difficult to see why the old phrase was felt to be no longer adequate. In proportion as *Κύριος* came to be identified in men's minds with the Lord Jesus, and love in return for His love the one constraining motive, would there seem something harsh and jarring in a phrase which would come to them as equivalent to "the fear of

Christ." Happily the LXX. version of the Book of Proverbs supplied also the synonym that was needed. In Prov. i. 7 there is an alternative rendering, standing in juxtaposition to the other, viz., *εὐσέβεια; εὐσέβεια εἰς θεὸν ἀρχὴ αἰσθήσεως*. The word occurs also in xiii. 11, and in Isai. xi. 2, where also it stands together with an alternative rendering *πνεῦμα φόβου θεοῦ*. The substantive, and yet more the adjective *εὐσεβής*, occurs with greater frequency in the Apocryphal books, especially in Ecclesiasticus. The way was thus prepared for the prominence which the word gains, just as the necessity was beginning to be felt, in the latest Epistles of the New Testament. It occurs ten times in the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, and four times in 2 Peter; Acts iii. 12 (where the A. V. gives "holiness"), being the only other passage. The temper of devoutness, reverence, godliness, had thus taken the place in Christian terminology of the older "fear of the Lord."

For the most part the choice of the Greek equivalents for the more prominent ethical or philosophical terms of the Proverbs is singularly felicitous. The history of the dominant word of the Book (*Chochmah*, or more commonly in the plural, *Chochmoth*, Wisdom) is indeed almost an exact parallel to that of the *Σοφία* by which it was rendered. As used in the earlier Books of the Old Testament (Exod. xxviii. 3, xxxv. 10, 31, 35, xxxvi. 1) it, or its cognate adjective, is applied to the wisdom of those who had the skill or art which was required for the ornamentation of the Tabernacle. We have traces of a higher application in Deut. iv. 6, xxxiv. 9. As used of the wisdom of Solomon in 1 Kings,

⁶ The student should compare the Greek of

iii. 11, 12	• with	Heb. xii. 5, 6.
iii. 34	"	Jas. iv. 6.
iv. 26	"	Heb. xii. 13.
xi. 31	"	1 Pet. iv. 18.
xiii. 7	"	2 Cor. vi. 10.
xxii. 8	"	2 Cor. ix. 7.
xxii. 8	"	Gal. vi. 7.
xxiv. 21	"	1 Pet. ii. 17.
xxv. 7	"	Luke xiv. 10.
xxv. 21	"	Rom. xii. 20.
xxvi. 11	"	• 2 Pet. ii. 22.
xxvii. 1.	"	James iv. 14, 16.
xxx. 4 (xxiv. 27 in LXX.).	τις ἀνέβη	

εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ παρέβη with John iii. 13.

and throughout Job and the Psalms, as in the Proverbs, the higher prevails exclusively. So, in like manner, Aristotle describes the gradual elevation of the Greek σοφός, how it was first applied to sculptors like Pheidias and Polycleitos, how σοφία thus came to be known as ἀρετὴ τέχνης, then became equivalent to the highest accuracy in all things, and finally was thought of as οὐδεμίας γενέσεως, separated altogether from the idea of art-production. So too the use of φρόνησις for a Hebrew word indicating the power which divides, discerns, distinguishes, is appropriate if the chief office of φρόνησις be τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα γνωρίζειν. The general choice of αἴσθησις rather than ἐπιστήμη for the rendering of the equivalent Hebrew word shewed that they recognized the essentially practical character of the knowledge of which the Proverbs spoke, as perceiving the right thing to be done, and the right word to be said, in each detail of life.

Lastly, may be noted here some salient features of this Greek Version.

(a) In not a few places it adds to the existing Hebrew; the addi-

tion sometimes having the character of an alternative rendering, sometimes consisting of entirely new matter.⁷

(b) Sometimes the insertions or variations have the character of an exegetical gloss, toning down or making more explicit what might seem doubtful or misleading in the original.⁸

The arrangement of the closing chapters in the Greek Version also presents striking peculiarities, the whole of ch. xxx. and xxxi. 1-9 being inserted after ch. xxiv. 22, as part of the same chapter, and the acrostic description of the true wife ending the book as ch. xxix. The most probable explanation of the transposition is that it originated in some accidental dislocation in the MS. from which the translation was made.

⁷ *E.g.* consult the Greek of i. 7; iv. 27; vi. 8; vii. 22; after ix. 12; ix. ad fin.; xi. 14; xvi. 5; xviii. 8 (substituted for the Hebrew); xix. 13 (do.); xxiii. 31; xxiv. 21; xxvii. 16 (substituted for the Hebrew); xxx. 31 (apparently a paraphrase for the Hebrew).

⁸ *E.g.* i. 28; ii. 16; iii. 9; xiii. 11; xvi. 4 (as an alternative rendering); xvii. 1; xxi. 9; xxvii. 19; xxvii. 22; xxx. 19.

THE P R O V E R B S

- CHAP. 1. THE** "proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;
 2 To know wisdom and instruction;
 To perceive the words of understanding;
 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
 Justice, and judgment, and equity;
 4 To give subtilty to the simple,
 To the young man knowledge and discretion.
 5 "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning;
 And a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
 6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation;
 The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

^a 1 K. 4. 32.
 ch. 10. 1.
 & 25. 1.
 Eccl. 12. 9.
^b ch. 2. 1, 9.
^c ch. 9. 4.
^d ch. 9. 9.
^e Ps. 78. 2.

¹ Heb. *equities*.

² Or, *advisement*.

³ Or, *an eloquent speech*.

I.-IX. This long exhortation, characterized by the frequent recurrence of the words "My son," is of the nature of a preface to the collection of the "Proverbs of Solomon" (x. 1). On i. 1-7, see *Introd.* p. 340.

2. The writer's purpose is to educate. He is writing what might be called an ethical handbook for the young, though not for the young only. Of all Books in the Old Testament this is the one which we may think of as most distinctively educational. A comparison of it with a like manual, the "Sayings of the Fathers," in the Mishna, would help the student to measure the difference between Scriptural and Rabbinic teaching.

wisdom] The power by which human personality reaches its highest spiritual perfection, by which all lower elements are brought into harmony with the highest, is presently personified as life-giving and creative. Cp. Job xxviii. 23 &c., notes.

instruction] i.e. Discipline or training, the practical complement of the more speculative wisdom.

understanding] The power of distinguishing right from wrong, truth from its counterfeit. The three words σοφία, παιδεία, φρόνησις (LXX.), express very happily the relation of the words in the Heb.

3. *wisdom*] Not the same word as in v. 2; better, perhaps, *thoughtfulness*.

justice] Rather, *righteousness*. The word in the Hebrew includes the ideas of truth and beneficence as well as "justice."

judgment] The teaching of the Proverbs is to lead us to pass a right sentence upon human actions, whether our own or another's.

equity] In the Heb. (see marg.) the plural is used, and expresses the many varying

forms and phases of the one pervading principle.

4. This verse points out the two classes for which the Book will be useful; (1) the "simple," literally the "open," the open-hearted, the minds ready to receive impressions for good or evil (v. 22); and (2) the "young," who need both knowledge and discipline. To these the teacher offers the "subtilty," which may turn to evil (Exod. xxi. 14) and become as the wisdom of the serpent (Gen. iii. 1), but which also takes its place, as that wisdom does, among the highest moral gifts (Matt. x. 16); the "knowledge" of good and evil; and the "discretion," or *discernment*, which sets a man on his guard, and keeps him from being duped by false advisers. The LXX. renderings, *παιδεία* for "subtilty," *αἴσθησις* for "knowledge," *ἐννοια* for "discretion," are interesting as shewing the endeavour to find exact parallels for the Hebrew in the terminology of Greek ethics.

5. But it is not for the young only that he writes. The "man of understanding" may gain "wise counsels," literally, the power to "steer" his course rightly on the dangerous seas of life. This "steersmanship," it may be noted, is a word almost peculiar to Proverbs (cp. "counsel" in xi. 14, xii. 5, xxiv. 6).

6. The Book has yet a further scope; these proverbs are to form a habit of mind. To gain through them the power of entering into the deeper meaning of other proverbs, is the end kept in view. Cp. Matt. xiii.

The rendering "interpretation" spoils the parallelism of the two clauses, and fails to express the Hebrew. In Hab. ii. 6, it is rendered "taunting proverb." Here "riddle" or "enigma" would better express the meaning.

- / ch. 9. 10. 7 'The fear of the Lord is ¹the beginning of knowledge:
 Eccl. 12. 13. But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 v ch. 4. 1. 8 'My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
 & 6. 20. And forsake not the law of thy mother:
 A ch. 3. 22. 9 For ²they shall be ²an ornament of grace unto thy head,
 And chains about thy neck.
 Gen. 39. 7, 10 My son, if sinners entice thee, ⁴consent thou not.
 &c. 11 If they say, Come with us, let us ⁴lay wait for blood,
 Ps. 1. 1. Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause;
 Eph. 5. 11. 12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave;
 Jer. 5. 26. And whole, ⁴as those that go down into the pit:
 Ps. 28. 1. 13 We shall find all precious substance,
 & 143. 7. We shall fill our houses with spoil:
 Ps. 1. 1. 14 Cast in thy lot among us;—let us all have one purse:
 ch. 4. 14. 15 My son, ³walk not thou in the way with them;
 Ps. 119. 101. ³Refrain thy foot from their path:
 Isai. 59. 7. 16 'O For their feet run to evil,—and make haste to shed blood.
 Rom. 3. 15. 17 Surely in vain the net is spread ³in the sight of any bird.
 18 And they lay wait for their *own* blood;
 They lurk privily for their *own* lives.
 p ch. 15. 27. 19 ²So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain;
 1 Tim. 6. 10. Which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

¹ Or, the principal part.

² Heb. an adding.

³ Heb. in the eyes of every thing that hath a wing.

7. The beginning of wisdom is found in the temper of reverence and awe. The fear of the finite in the presence of the Infinite, of the sinful in the presence of the Holy (cp. Job xlii. 5, 6), this for the Israelite was the starting-point of all true wisdom. In the Book of Job (xxviii. 28) it appears as an oracle accompanied by the noblest poetry. In Ps. cxi. 10 it comes as the choral close of a Temple hymn. Here it is the watchword of a true ethical education. This fear has no "torment," and is compatible with child-like love. But this and not love is the "beginning of wisdom." Through successive stages and by the discipline of life, love blends with it and makes it perfect.

9. To the Israelite's mind no signs or badges of joy or glory were higher in worth than the garland round the head, the gold chain round the neck, worn by kings and the favourites of kings (Gen. xli. 42; Dan. v. 29).

10. The first great danger which besets the simple and the young is that of evil companionship. The only safety is to be found in the power of saying,—“No,” to all such invitations.

11. The temptation against which the teacher seeks to guard his disciple is that of joining a band of highway robbers. The “vain men” who gathered round Jephthah (Judg. xi. 3), the lawless or discontented who came to David in Adullam (1 S. xxii. 2), the bands of robbers who infested every part of the country in the period of the New Testament, and against whom every Roman governor had to wage incessant war, shew how deeply rooted the evil was in Palestine. Cp. Ps. x. 7, 10 note.

without cause] Better, in vain; most modern commentators join the words with “innocent,” and interpret them after Job i.

9. The evil-doers deride their victims as being righteous “in vain.” They get nothing by it. It does them no good.

12. i.e. “We will be as all-devouring as Sheol. The destruction of those we attack shall be as sudden as that of those who go down quickly into the pit.” Some render the latter clause, and upright men as those that go down to the pit. “Pit” here is a synonym for Sheol, the great cavernous depth, the shadow-world of the dead.

13, 14. The second form of temptation (see v. 10 note) appeals to the main attraction of the robber-life, its wild communism, the sense of equal hazards and equal hopes.

17. Strictly speaking, this is the first proverb (i.e. similitude) in the Book; a proverb which has received a variety of interpretations. The true meaning seems to be as follows: “For in vain, to no purpose, is the net spread out openly. Clear as the warning is, it is in vain. The birds still fly in. So the great net of God's judgments is spread out, open to the eyes of all, and yet the doers of evil, wilfully blind, still rush into it.” Others take the words as pointing to the failure of the plans of the evil-doers against the innocent (the “bird”); others, again, interpret the proverb of the young man who thinks that he at least shall not fall into the snares laid for him, and so goes blindly into them.

19. Not robbery only, but all forms of covetousness are destructive of true life.

- 20 ¹ Wisdom crieth without;— she uttereth her voice in the streets: ^a ch. 8. 1, &c.
 21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the ^b 9. 3. John 7. 37.

In the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,

- 22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?

And the scorners delight in their scorning,
 And fools hate knowledge?

- 23 Turn you at my reproof:

Behold, ^a I will pour out my spirit unto you,
 I will make known my words unto you.

- 24 ^a Because I have called, and ye refused;

I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

- 25 But ye ^a have set at nought all my counsel,

And would none of my reproof:

- 26 ^a I also will laugh at your calamity;

I will mock when your fear cometh;

- 27 When ^a your fear cometh as desolation,

And your destruction cometh as a whirlwind,

When distress and anguish cometh upon you.

- 28 ^a Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer;

They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

- 29 For that they ^a hated knowledge,

And did not ^a choose the fear of the LORD:

- 30 ^b They would none of my counsel:

They despised all my reproof.

- 31 Therefore ^a shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,

And be filled with their own devices.

¹ Heb. *Wisdoms*, that is, *Excellent wisdom*.

^a Joel 2. 28.
^b Isai. 65. 12.
 & 66. 4.
 Jer. 7. 13.
 Zech. 7. 11.
^c Ps. 107. 11.
 ver. 30.
 Luke 7. 30.
^d Ps. 2. 4.
^e ch. 10. 24.
^f Job 27. 8.
 & 35. 12.
 Isai. 1. 15.
 Jer. 11. 11.
 & 14. 12.
 Ezek. 8. 18.
 Mic. 3. 4.
 Zech. 7. 13.
 Jam. 4. 3.
^g Job 21. 14.
 ver. 22.
^h Ps. 119. 173.
ⁱ ver. 25.
 Ps. 81. 11.
^j Job 4. 8.
 ch. 14. 14.
 & 22. 8.
 Isai. 3. 11.
 Jer. 6. 19.

20. Wisdom is personified. In the Hebrew the noun is a feminine plural (see p. 349), as though this Wisdom were the queen of all wisdoms, uniting in herself all their excellences. She lifts up her voice, not in solitude, but in the haunts of men "without," i.e. outside the walls, in the streets, at the highest point of all places of concourse, in the open space of the gates where the elders meet and the king sits in judgment, in the heart of the city itself (v. 21); through sages, lawgivers, teachers, and yet more through life and its experiences, she preaches to mankind. Socrates said that the fields and the trees taught him nothing, but that he found the wisdom he was seeking in his converse with the men whom he met as he walked in the streets and *agora* of Athens.

22. Cp. Ps. i. 1 note. (1) The "simple," lit. *open*, fatally open to evil; (2) the "scorners," mocking at all good; lastly (3) the "fools" in the sense of being hardened, obstinate, perverse, hating the knowledge they have rejected.

23. The teaching of Divine Wisdom is essentially the same as that of the Divine Word (John vii. 38, 39). "Turning," repentance and conversion, this is what she calls the simple to. The promise of the Spirit is also like His (John xiv. 26). And

with the spirit there are to be also the "words" of Wisdom. Not the "spirit" alone, nor "words" alone, but both together, each doing its appointed work—this is the divine instrumentality for the education of such as will receive it.

24. The threats and warnings of Wisdom are also foreshadowings of the teaching of Jesus. There will come a time when "too late" shall be written on all efforts, on all remorse. Cp. Matt. xxv. 10, 30.

26. Cp. marg. ref. The scorn and derision with which men look on pride and malice, baffled and put to shame, has something that answers to it in the Divine Judgment. It is, however, significant that in the fuller revelation of the mind and will of the Father in the person of the Son no such language meets us. Sadness, sternness, severity, there may be, but, from first to last, no word of mere derision.

27. *desolation*] Better, *tempest*. The rapid gathering of the clouds, the rushing of the mighty winds, are the fittest types of the suddenness with which in the end the judgment of God shall fall on those who look not for it. Cp. Matt. xxiv. 29 &c.; Luke xvii. 24.

29-31. This is no arbitrary sentence. The fault was all along their own. The fruit of their own ways is death.

32 For the ¹turning away of the simple shall slay them,
And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

^d Ps. 25. 12, 13. 33 But ^awhoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely,
^e Ps. 112. 7. And ^ashall be quiet from fear of evil.

CHAP. 2. MY son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And ^ahide my commandments with thee;

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom,
And apply thine heart to understanding;

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge,
And ²liftest up thy voice for understanding;

^b ch. 3. 14. 4 ^bIf thou seekest her as silver,
And searchest for her as for hid treasures;
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God.

6 ^cFor the LORD giveth wisdom:
Out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous:
^aHe is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment,
And ^cpreserveth the way of his saints.

^e 1 Sam. 2. 9. Ps. 66. 9. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment,
And equity; *yea*, every good path.

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart,
And knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee,
^fUnderstanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*,
From the man that speaketh froward things;

13 Who leave the paths of uprightness,

¹ Or, *ease of the simple*.

² Heb. *givest thy voice*.

32. *turning*] Wisdom had called the simple to "turn," and they had turned, but it was "away" from her. For "prosperity" read *carelessness*. Not outward prosperity, but the temper which it too often produces, the easy-going indifference to higher truths, is that which destroys.

II. Now in the Divine order comes the promise (v. 5). The conditions of its fulfilment are stated in vv. 1-4 in four sets of parallel clauses, each with some shade of distinct meaning. Thus not "receiving" only, but "hiding" or treasuring up—not the "ear" only, but the "heart"—not the mere "cry," but the eager "lifting up the voice."

4. Note the illustrations. (1) Contact with Phœnician commerce, and joint expeditions in ships of Tarshish (see Ps. lxxii. 10 note), had made the Israelites familiar with the risks and the enterprise of the miner's life. Cp. Job xxviii. (2) The treasure hid in a field, is the second point of comparison. Such treasure-seeking has always been characteristic of the East. Cp. Matt. xiii. 44.

5. The promise. The highest blessedness is to know God (John xvii. 3). If any distinction between "the LORD" (Jehovah)

and "God" (Elohim) can be pressed here, it is that in the former the personality, in the latter the glory, of the Divine nature is prominent.

6. Men do not gain wisdom by any efforts of their own, but God gives it according to the laws of His own goodness.

7. *sound wisdom*] "Soundness," an idea which passes on into that of health and safety. Cp. "sound doctrine" in 1 Tim. i. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 3.

8. *saints*] The devout and God-fearing. Cp. Ps. lxxxv. 8 &c. The occurrence of the word here, in a Book that became more and more prominent as prophetic utterances ceased, probably helped to determine its application in the period of the Maccabean struggles to those who specially claimed for themselves the title of "devout" (*Chasidim* the *Ascetæ* of 1 Macc. vii. 13).

10. Another picture of the results of living in the fear of the Lord. Not that to which it leads a man, but that from which it saves him, is brought into view. Notice also that it is one thing for wisdom to find entrance into the Goul, another to be welcomed as a "pleasant" guest.

12-15. The evil-doers here include not robbers and murderers only (i. 10-16), but

- To ^owalk in the ways of darkness ;
 14 ^Who ^hrejoice to do evil,
 And ⁱdelight in the frowardness of the wicked ;
 15 ^kWhose ways are crooked,
 And *they* froward in their paths :
 16 To deliver thee from ^the strange woman,
^mEven from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words :
 17 ⁿWhich forsaketh the guide of her youth,
 And forgetteth the covenant of her God.
 18 For ^oher house inclineth unto death,
 And her paths unto the dead.
 19 None that go unto her return again,
 Neither take they hold of the paths of life.
 20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*,
 And keep the paths of the righteous.
 21 ^pFor the upright shall dwell in the land,
 And the perfect shall remain in it.
 22 ^qBut the wicked shall be cut off from the earth,
 And the transgressors shall be ^rrooted out of it.

^o John 3. 19,
 20.
^h ch. 10. 23.
 Jer. 11. 15.
ⁱ Rom. 1. 32.
^k Ps. 125. 5.
^t ch. 5. 20.
^m ch. 5. 3.
 & 6. 24.
 & 7. 5.
ⁿ See Mal.
 2. 14, 15.
^o ch. 7. 27.

^p Ps. 37. 29.

^q Job 18. 17.
 Ps. 37. 28.
 & 104. 35.

^a Deut. 8. 1.
 & 30. 16, 20.

CHAP. 3. MY son, forget not my law ;
 "But let thine heart keep my commandments :
 2 For length of days, and ²long life,

¹ Or, *plucked up*.

² Heb. *years of life*.

all who leave the straight path and the open day for crooked ways, perverse counsels, deeds of darkness. "To delight &c." (v. 14) is the lowest depth of all.

16. The second great evil, the warnings against which are frequent (see marg. ref.). Two words are used to describe the class. (1) "The strange woman" is one who does not belong to the family, one who by birth is outside the Covenant of Israel. (2) "The stranger" is none other than a foreigner. It is the word used of the "strange" wives of Solomon (1 K. xi. 1, 8), and of those of the Jews who returned from Babylon (Ezra x. *passim*). The two words together, in connexion with those which follow, and which imply at once marriage and a profession of religious faith, point to some interesting facts in the social history of Israel. Whatever form the sin here referred to had assumed before the monarchy (and the Book of Judges testifies to its frequency), the intercourse with Phœnicians and other nations under Solomon had a strong tendency to increase it. The king's example would naturally be followed, and it probably became a fashion to have *foreign* wives and concubines. At first, it would seem, this was accompanied by some show of proselytism (v. 17) ; but the old heathen leaven presently broke out ; the sensual worship of other gods led the way to a life of harlotry. The stringent laws of the Mosaic code (Lev. xix. 29, xxi. 9 ; Deut. xxiii. 18) probably deterred the women of Israel from that sin, and led to a higher standard of purity among them than prevailed among other nations.

Most interpreters have, however, gene-

ralized the words as speaking of any adulteress. The LXX. as if reluctant to speak of facts so shameful, has allegorized them, and seen in the temptress the personification of "evil counsel."

17. *the guide of her youth*] Better, **the familiar friend** (cp. xvi. 28, xvii. 9). The "friend" is, of course, the husband, or the man to whom the strange woman first belonged as a recognized concubine. Cp. Jer. iii. 4

the covenant of her God] The sin of the adulteress is not against man only but against the Law of God, against His Covenant. The words point to some religious formula of espousals. Cp. Mal. ii. 14.

18. The house of the adulteress is as Hades, the realm of death, haunted by the spectral shadows of the dead (Rephaim, see Ps. lxxxviii. 10 note), who have perished there.

19. The words describe more than the fatal persistency of the sinful habit when once formed. A resurrection from that world of the dead to "the paths of life" is all but impossible.

20. The previous picture of shame and sin is brought before the disciple as an incentive to a better course.

21, 22. Noticeable here is the Hebrew love of home and love of country. To "dwell in the land" is (cp. Ex. xx. 12 ; Levit. xxv. 18 &c.) the highest blessing for the whole people and for individual men. In contrast with it is the life of the sinner cut off from the land (not "earth") of his fathers.

III. 2. Three words carry on the chain

• Ps. 119.
166.

• Ex. 13. 9.
Deut. 6. 8.
ch. 6. 21.
& 7. 3.
• Jer. 17. 1.
2 Cor. 3. 3.
• Ps. 111. 10.
See 1 Sam.
2. 26.
Acts 2. 47.
Rom. 14. 13.
• Ps. 37. 3, 5.
• Jer. 9. 23.
• 1 Ch. 28. 9.
• Jer. 10. 23.
• Rom. 12. 16.
• Job 1. 1.
ch. 10. 6.
• Job 21. 24.
• Ex. 22. 29.
& 23. 19.
& 34. 26.
Deut. 26. 2.
Mal. 3. 10.
Luke 14. 13.
• Deut. 28. 8.
• Ps. 94. 12.
Rev. 3. 19.
• Deut. 8. 5.
• ch. 8. 34.
35.

And ^bpeace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee :

^cBind them about thy neck ;

^dWrite them upon the table of thine heart :

4 ^eSo shalt thou find favour and ¹good understanding
In the sight of God and man.

5 ^fTrust in the LORD with all thine heart ; ^g

^hAnd lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 ⁱIn all thy ways acknowledge him,

And he shall ^jdirect thy paths.

7 ^kBe not wise in thine own eyes :

^lFear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be ^mhealth to thy navel,

And ⁿmarrow to thy bones.

9 ^oHonour the LORD with thy substance,

And with the firstfruits of all thine increase :

10 ^pSo shall thy barns be filled with plenty,

And thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 ^qMy son, despise not the chastening of the LORD ;

Neither be weary of his correction :

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth ;

^rEven as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

13 ^sHappy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom,

And ^tthe man *that* getteth understanding.

¹ Or, *good success.*

² Heb. *medicine.*

³ Heb. *watering, or, moistening.*

⁴ Heb. *the man that draweth out understanding.*

of blessings ; (1) "Length of days" (see Ps. xci. 16 note) ; (2) "Years of *life*," i.e. of a life worth living (cp. Pss. xxx. 5, xlii. 8) ; (3) "Peace;" tranquillity inward and outward, the serenity of life continuing through old age till death. Cp. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

3. The two elements of a morally perfect character. (1) "Mercy," shutting out all forms of selfishness and hate. (2) "Truth," shutting out all deliberate falsehood, all hypocrisy, conscious or unconscious. The words that follow possibly refer to the Eastern custom of writing sacred names on pieces of papyrus or parchment, and wearing them round the neck, as charms and talismans against evil. Cp., however, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

4. Cp. Luke ii. 52. These are the two conditions of true human growth.

5. In preaching "trust in God" the moralist anticipates the teaching that man is justified by faith. To confide in God's will, the secret of all true greatness, is to rise out of all our anxieties and plans and fears when we think of ourselves as the arbiters of our own fortunes, and so "lean to our own understanding."

6. Not in acts of solemn worship or great crises only, but "in *all* thy ways;" and then God will make the "path" straight and even.

7. The great hindrance to all true wisdom is the thought that we have already attained it.

8. *navel*] The central region of the body

is taken as the representative of all the vital organs. For "health" we should read *healing*, or, as in the marg. There is probably a reference to the local applications used by the surgery of the period as means of healing.

9. "Substance" points to capital, "increase" to revenue. The LXX. as if to guard against ill-gotten gains being offered as an atonement for the ill-getting, inserts the qualifying words, "honour the Lord from thy *righteous* labours."

10. Cp. marg. ref. This fulness of outward blessings does not exclude the thought of the "chastening" (v. 11), without which the discipline of life would be incomplete. "Presses" are the vats of a Roman vineyard, into which the wine flowed through a pipe from the wine-press.

11. *despise...be weary*] The temper is not that of contempt. To struggle impatiently, to fret and chafe, when suffering comes on us, is the danger to which we are exposed when we do not accept it as from the hands of God. Cp. Jonah iv. 9 ; Job v. 17.

12. The first distinct utterance of a truth which has been so full of comfort to many thousands ; it is the summing up of all controversies (cp. John ix. 2) as to the mystery of suffering. The Apostle writing to the Hebrews can find no stronger comfort (Heb. xii. 6) than this ; the Church, in her Visitation Service, has no truer message for the sufferer.

13. The first beatitude of the Proverbs

- 14 ^aFor the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold. ^a Job 28. 13.
Ps. 19. 10.
ch. 8. 11, 19.
& 16. 16.
- 15 She *is* more precious than rubies :
And 'all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. ^a Matt. 13. 44.
- 16 "Length of days *is* in her right hand ;
And in her left hand riches and honour. ^a ch. 8. 18.
1 Tim. 4. 8.
- 17 "Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths *are* peace. ^a Matt. 11. 29, 30.
- 18 She *is* "a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her :
And happy *is every one* that retaineth her. ^a Gen. 2. 9.
& 3. 22.
- 19 "The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth ;
By understanding hath he 'established the heavens. ^a Ps. 104. 24.
& 136. 5.
ch. 8. 27.
Jer. 10. 12.
& 61. 15.
- 20 "By his knowledge the depths *are* broken up,
And ^bthe clouds drop down the dew. ^a Gen. 1. 9.
^b Deut. 33. 28.
Job 36. 28.
- 21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes :
Keep sound wisdom and discretion : ^a ch. 1. 9.
- 22 So shall they be life unto thy soul,—and 'grace to thy neck.
- 23 "Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely,
And thy foot shall not stumble. ^a Ps. 37. 24.
& 91. 11, 12.
ch. 10. 9.
- 24 "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid :
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. ^a Lev. 26. 6.
Ps. 3. 5.
& 4. 8.
- 25 "Be not afraid of sudden fear,
Neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. ^a Ps. 91. 5.
& 112. 7.

¹ Or, prepared.

introduces a new lesson. "Getteth understanding," lit. as in the margin, probably in the sense of "drawing forth from God's store, from the experience of life" (as in viii. 35, xviii. 22). The preciousness of wisdom is dwelt on here, not the use to be made of it.

14. Cp. ii. 4. "Fine gold" is apparently a technical word of that commerce, the native gold in the nugget or the dust.

15. rubies] The *pennim* were among the costly articles of traffic, and red or rose-coloured (Lam. iv. 7). The last fact has led some to identify them with coral, or (as in the A.V.) with "rubies." Most commentators, however, have identified them with pearls, which may connect this passage with Matt. vii. 6, xiii. 45. The words of the promise here are almost the echo of 1 K. iii. 11-13.

17. "Ways" and "paths" describe the two kinds of roads, the "highway" and the "byway." In both these he who was guided by Wisdom would walk securely.

18. This and the other references in Proverbs (xi. 30, xiii. 12, xv. 4) are the only allusions in any Book of the Old Testament, after Genesis, to the "tree" itself, or to its spiritual significance. Further, there is the tendency to a half-allegorizing application of that history. "The tree of life" which Adam was not to taste lies open to his children. Wisdom is the "tree of life," giving a true immortality. The symbol entered largely into the religious imagery of Assyria, Egypt, and Persia. Philo, going

a step further, found in the two trees the ideal representatives of speculative knowledge and moral wisdom; and the same image subserves a higher purpose in the promises and the visions of Rev. ii. 7, xii. 2.

19. Hitherto Wisdom has been thought of in relation to men. Now the question comes, What is she in relation to God? and the answer is, that the creative act implies a Divine Wisdom, through which the Divine Will acts. This thought, developed in ch. viii., is the first link in the chain which connects this "Wisdom" with the Divine Word, the Logos of St. John's Gospel. Cp. Ps. xxxiii. 6; John i. 3. The words of the writer of the Proverbs take their place among the proofs of the dogmatic statements of the Nicene Creed.

20. Cp. Gen. i. 7, vii. 11; Job xxxviii. Looking upon the face of Nature, men see two storehouses of the living water, without which it would be waste and barren. From the "depths" rush forth the surging waves, from the "clouds" falls the gentle rain or "dew;" but both alike are ordered by the Divine Wisdom.

21. let not them depart] i.e. The wisdom and discretion of the following clause. Keep thine eye on them, as one who watches over priceless treasures.

25. Under the form of this strong prohibition there is an equally strong promise. So safe will all thy ways be that to fear will be a sin.

- 26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence,
And shall keep thy foot from being taken.
- ^a Rom. 13. 7. 27 ^a Withhold not good from ¹ them to whom it is due,
Gal. 6. 10. When it is in the power of thine hand to do it.
- ^a Lev. 19. 13. 28 ^a Say not unto thy neighbour,
Deut. 24. 15. Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give;
When thou hast it by thee.
- 29 ² Devise not evil against thy neighbour,
Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.
- ^a Rom. 12. 18. 30 ⁱ Strive not with a man without cause,
If he have done thee no harm.
- ^a Ps. 37. 1. 31 ^k Envy thou not ³ the oppressor,—and choose none of his ways.
& 73. 3. 32 For the froward *is* abomination to the LORD:
ch. 24. 1. ¹ But his secret *is* with the righteous.
^a Ps. 25. 14. 33 ^m The curse of the LORD *is* in the house of the wicked:
^m Lev. 26. 14, &c. But ⁿ he blesseth the habitation of the just.
- Ps. 37. 22. 34 ^o Surely he scorneth the scorners:
Mal. 2. 2. But he giveth grace unto the lowly.
- ^a Ps. 1. 3. 35 The wise shall inherit glory:
^o Jam. 4. 6. But shame ⁴ shall be the promotion of fools.
1 Pet. 5. 5.
- ^a Ps. 34. 11. **CHAP. 4. HEAR,** “ye children, the instruction of a father,
ch. 1. 8. And attend to know understanding.
2 For I give you good doctrine,—forsake ye not my law.
3 For I was my father’s son,
^b 1 Ch. 29. 1. ^b Tender and only *beloved* in the sight of my mother.

¹ Heb. *the owners thereof*.² Or, *Practises no evil*.³ Heb. *a man of violence*.⁴ Heb. *exalteth the fools*.

27-35. A marked change in style. The continuous exhortation is replaced by a series of maxims.

from them to whom it is due] Lit. as in the marg. The precept expresses the great Scriptural thought that the so-called possession of wealth is but a stewardship; that the true owners of what we call our own are those to whom, with it, we may do good. Not to relieve them is a breach of trust.

28. Procrastination is specially fatal to the giving impulse. The LXX. adds the caution, “for thou knowest not what the morrow will bring forth.”

29. *securely*] i.e. “With full trust,” without care or suspicion. Cp. Judg. xviii. 7, 27.

31. A protest against the tendency to worship success, to think the lot of the “man of violence” enviable, and therefore to be chosen.

32. The true nature of such success. That which men admire is to Jehovah an abomination. His “secret,” i.e. His close, intimate communion as of “friend with friend,” is with the righteous.

33. The thought, like that which appears in Zech. v. 3, 4, and pervades the tragedies of Greek drama, is of a curse, an Atë, dwelling in a house from generation to generation, the source of ever-recurring woes. There is, possibly, a contrast between the “house” or “palace” of the rich oppressor and the lowly shepherd’s hut, the

“sheep-cote” (2 S. vii. 8) ennobled only by its upright inhabitants.

34. *Surely*] Better, **If he scorneth the scorners**, i.e. Divine scorn of evil is the complement, and, as it were, the condition, of Divine bounty to the lowly (cp. marg. reff. and i. 26 note).

35. The marg. conveys the thought that “fools” glory in that which is indeed their shame. Others take the clause as meaning “every fool takes up shame,” i.e. gains nothing but that.

IV. 1. The words “ye children” indicate as usual a new section returning, after the break of iii. 27-35, to the old strain of fatherly counsel.

2. *doctrine*] Knowledge orally given and received.

3. Probably the words of Solomon himself, who looks back from his glorious throne and his matured wisdom to the training which was the starting point. The part taken by Bathsheba in 1 K. i., no less than the friendship between her and Nathan, indicates that a mother’s training might well have laid the foundation of the king’s future wisdom. Among the Israelites and Egyptians alone, of the nations of the old world, was the son’s reverence for the mother placed side by side with that which he owed to his father.

“Only *beloved*,” lit. “only,” but the word is used apparently (as in Gen. xxii. 2, 12)

- 4 'He taught me also, and said unto me,
 'Let thine heart retain my words:
 'Keep my commandments, and live.
- 5 'Get wisdom, get understanding:
 Forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.
- 6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee:
 'Love her, and she shall keep thee.
- 7 'Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom:
 And with all thy getting get understanding.
- 8 'Exalt her, and she shall promote thee:
 She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.
- 9 She shall give to thine head 'an ornament of grace:
 'A crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.
- 10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings;
 'And the years of thy life shall be many.
- 11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;
 I have led thee in right paths.
- 12 When thou goest, 'thy steps shall not be straitened;
 'And when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.
- 13 Take fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go:
 Keep her; for she *is* thy life.
- 14 'Enter not into the path of the wicked,
 And go not in the way of evil *men*.
- 15 Avoid it, pass not by it,—turn from it, and pass away.
- 16 'For they sleep not, except they have done mischief;
 And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.
- 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
 And drink the wine of violence.
- 18 'But the path of the just *is* as the shining light,
 That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
- 19 'The way of the wicked *is* as darkness:
 They know not at what they stumble.
- 20 My son, attend to my words;
 Incline thine ear unto my sayings.
- 21 'Let them not depart from thine eyes;
 'Keep them in the midst of thine heart.
- ' Eph. 6. 4.
 ' ch. 7. 2.
 ' ch. 2. 2, 3.
 ' 2 Thess. 2. 10.
 ' Matt. 13. 44.
 Luke 10. 42.
 ' 1 Sam. 2. 30.
 ' ch. 1. 9.
 & 3. 22.
 ' ch. 3. 2.
 ' Ps. 18. 36.
 ' Ps. 91. 11, 12.
 ' Ps. 1. 1.
 ch. 1. 10. 15.
 ' Ps. 36. 4.
 Isai. 57. 20.
 ' Matt. 5. 14, 45.
 Phil. 2. 15.
 ' 2 Sam. 23. 4.
 ' 1 Sam. 2. 9.
 Job 18. 5, 6.
 Isai. 59. 9, 10.
 Jer. 23. 12.
 ' ch. 3. 3, 21.
 ' ch. 2. 1.

1 Or, *she shall compass thee with a crown of glory.*

in its derived sense, "beloved like an only son." The Vulg. gives "unigenitus." Cp. the words applied to our Lord, as the "only begotten" (John i. 14), the "beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

4-20. The counsel which has come to him, in substance, from his father. Cp. it with 2 S. xxiii. 2 &c.; 1 Chr. xxviii. 9, xxix. 17; Pss. xv., xxiv., xxxvii.

7. Or, "The beginning of wisdom is—get wisdom." To seek is to find, to desire is to obtain.

12. The ever-recurring parable of the journey of life. In the way of wisdom the path is clear and open, obstacles disappear; in the quickest activity ("when thou runnest") there is no risk of falling.

13. *she is thy life*] Another parallel between personified Wisdom in this Book and the Incarnate Wisdom in John i. 4.

16. A fearful stage of debasement. Sin is the condition without which there can be no repose.

17. *i.e.* Bread and wine gained by unjust deeds. Cp. Amos ii. 8. A less probable interpretation is, "They eat wickedness as bread, and drink violence as wine." Cp. Job xv. 16, xxxiv. 7.

18. *shining...shineth*] The two Hebrew words are different; the first having the sense of **bright** or clear. The beauty of a cloudless sunshine growing on, shining as it goes, to the full and perfect day, is chosen as the fittest figure of the ever-increasing brightness of the good man's life. Cp. marg. *reff.*

19. Cp. our Lord's teaching (John xi. 10, cii. 35).

20. The teacher speaks again in his own person.

- ^a ch. 3. 8.
& 12. 18.
- 22 For they *are* life unto those that find them,
And ^{a1} health to all their flesh.
- 23 Keep thy heart ² with all diligence;
For out of it *are* the issues of life.
- 24 Put away from thee ³ a froward mouth,
And perverse lips put far from thee.
- 25 Let thine eyes look right on,
And let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
- 26 Ponder the path of thy feet,
And ⁴ let all thy ways be established.
- 27 ^a Turn not to the right hand nor to the left:
^b Remove thy foot from evil.
- CHAP. 5.** MY son, attend unto my wisdom,
And bow thine ear to my understanding:
2 That thou mayest regard discretion,
And *that* thy lips may ^a keep knowledge.
3 ^b For the lips of a strange woman drop *as* an honeycomb,
And her ^c mouth is ^c smoother than oil:
4 But her end is ^d bitter as wormwood,
^e Sharp as a twoedged sword.
5 ^f Her feet go down to death;—her steps take hold on hell.
6 Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life,
Her ways are moveable, *that* thou canst not know *them*.
7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children,
And depart not from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove thy way far from her,
And come not nigh the door of her house:
9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others,
And thy years unto the cruel:
10 Lest strangers be filled with ^g thy wealth;
And thy labours *be* in the house of a stranger;
- ¹ Heb. *medicine*.
² Heb. *above all keeping*.
³ Heb. *frowardness* of
mouth, and perverseness
of lips.
⁴ Or, *all thy ways shall be*
⁵ Heb. *palate*.
⁶ Heb. *thy strength*.

22. *health*] See iii. 8 note.

23. Better, as in the marg., *i.e.* with more vigilance than men use over aught else. The words that follow carry on the same similitude. The fountains and wells of the East were watched over with special care. The heart is such a fountain, out of it flow the "issues" of life. Shall men let those streams be tainted at the fountain-head?

24-26. Speech turned from its true purpose, the wandering eye that leads on to evil, action hasty and inconsiderate, are the natural results where we do not "above all keeping keep our heart" (v. 23).

27. The ever-recurring image of the straight road on which no one ever loses his way represents here as elsewhere the onward course through life of the man who seeks and finds wisdom.

V. 1. The formula of a new counsel, introducing another warning against the besetting sin of youth (ii. 16).

2. *And that thy lips may keep*] Lit. "and thy lips shall keep."

3. *smoother than oil*] The same comparison

is used in marg. ref. to describe the treachery of a false friend.

4. *wormwood*] In Eastern medicine this herb, the Absinthium of Greek and Latin botanists, was looked upon as poisonous rather than medicinal. Cp. Rev. viii. 11.

6. Or (with the LXX. and Vulg.), *Lest she should ponder* (or "She ponders not") *the way of life, her paths move to and fro* (unsteady as an earthquake); *she knows not*. The words describe with a terrible vividness the state of heart and soul which prostitution brings upon its victims; the reckless blindness that will not think, tottering on the abyss, yet loud in its defiant mirth, ignoring the dreadful future.

9. *thine honour*] *i.e.* "The grace and freshness of thy youth" (cp. Hosea xiv. 6; Dan. x. 8). The thought of this is to guard the young man against the sins that stain and mar it. The slave of lust sacrifices "years" that might have been peaceful and happy to one who is merciless.

10. *strangers*] The whole gang of those into whose hands the slave of lust yields himself. The words are significant as

- 11 And thou mourn at the last,
When thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
12 And say, How have I ^ohated instruction,
And my heart ^adespised reproof;
13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
14 I was almost in all ^ovil
In the midst of the congregation and assembly.
15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
And running waters out of thine own well.
16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad,
And rivers of waters in the streets.
17 Let them be only thine own,—and not strangers' with thee.
18 Let thy fountain be blessed:
And rejoice with ^othe wife of thy youth.
19 ^kLet her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe;
Let her breasts ¹satisfy thee at all times;
And ²be thou ravished always with her love.
20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with ¹a strange woman,
And embrace the bosom of a stranger?
21 ^mFor the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD,
And he pondereth all his goings.
22 ⁿHis own iniquities shall take the wicked himself,
And he shall be holden with the cords of his ^osins.
23 ^oHe shall die without instruction;
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.
- CHAP. 6.** MY son, ^aif thou be surety for thy friend,
If thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

¹ Heb. *water thee*.

² Heb. *err thou always in her love*.

³ Heb. *sin*.

^o ch. 1. 29.

^a ch. 1. 25.

& 12. 1.

^k Mal. 2. 14.

^k See Cant.

2. 9.

& 4. 5.

& 7. 3.

¹ ch. 7. 5.

^m 2 Chr. 16. 9.

Job 31. 4.

& 34. 21.

ch. 15. 3.

Jer. 18. 17.

& 32. 19.

Hos. 7. 2.

Heb. 4. 13.

ⁿ Ps. 9. 15.

^o Job 4. 21.

& 36. 12.

^a ch. 11. 15.

& 20. 16.

& 27. 13.

showing that the older punishment of death (Deut. xxii. 21; Ezek. xvi. 38; John viii. 5) was not always inflicted, and that the detected adulterer was exposed rather to indefinite extortion. Besides loss of purity and peace, the sin, in all its forms, brings poverty.

11. Yet one more curse is attendant on impurity. Then, as now, disease was the penalty of this sin.

12. Bitterer than slavery, poverty, disease, will be the bitterness of self-reproach, the hopeless remorse that worketh death.

14. The conscience-stricken sinner had been "almost" given up to every form of evil in the sight of the whole assembly of fellow-townsmen; "almost," therefore, condemned to the death which that assembly might inflict (Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22). The public scandal of the sin is brought in as its last aggravating feature.

15. The teacher seeks to counteract the evils of mere sensual passion chiefly by setting forth the true blessedness of which it is the counterfeit. The true wife is as a fountain of refreshment, where the weary soul may quench its thirst. Even the joy which is of the senses appears, as in the Song of Solomon, purified and stainless (see v. 19 marg. reff.).

16. Wedded love streams forth in blessing

on all around, on children and on neighbours and in the streets, precisely because the wife's true love is given to the husband only.

19. Better, "A loving hind (is she) and pleasant roe." As in the whole circle of Arab and Persian poetry the antelope and the gazelle are the chosen images of beauty, so they served with equal fitness for the masculine and feminine types of it. Cp. the names Tabitha and Dorcas (Acts ix. 36).

20. Emphasis is laid (see ii. 16 note) on the origin of the beguiler.

21. One more warning. The sin is not against man, nor dependent on man's detection only. The secret sin is open before the eyes of Jehovah. In the balance of His righteous judgment are weighed all human acts.

pondereth] Note the recurrence of the word used of the harlot herself (see v. 6 note): she ponders not, God does.

23. The end of the sensual life:—to "die without instruction," life ended, but the discipline of life fruitless; to "go astray," as if drunk with the greatness of his folly (the same word is used as for "ravished" in v. 19, see marg.), even to the end. This is the close of what might have gone on brightening to the perfect day (iv. 18).

VI. 1. *surety*] The "pledge," or security

- 2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth,
Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.
3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
When thou art come into the hand of thy friend;
Go, humble thyself ¹and make sure thy friend.
^b Ps. 132. 4. 4 ^bGive not sleep to thine eyes,—nor slumber to thine eyelids.
5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of ^cthe hunter,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.
^c Job 12. 7. 6 ^cGo to the ant, thou sluggard;—consider her ways, and be
wise:
7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,
8 Provideth her meat in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.
^d ch. 24. 33, 34. 9 ^dHow long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
^e ch. 10. 4. 11 ^eSo shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth,
^f 13. 4. And thy want as an armed man.
^g 20. 4.

¹ Or, *so shalt thou prevail with thy friend.*

for payment, which *e.g.* David was to bring back from his brothers (1 Sam. xvii. 18). So the word was used in the primitive trade transactions of the early Israelites.

In the warnings against this suretyship in the Book of Proverbs we may trace the influence of intercourse with the Phœnicians. The merchants of Tyre and Zidon seem to have discovered the value of credit as an element of wealth. A man might obtain goods, or escape the pressure of a creditor at an inconvenient season, or obtain a loan on more favourable terms, by finding security. To give such security might be one of the kindest offices which one friend could render to another. Side by side, however, with a legitimate system of credit there sprang up, as in later times, a fraudulent counterfeit. Phœnician or Jewish money-lenders (the “stranger”) were ready to make their loans to the spendthrift. He was equally ready to find a companion (the “friend”) who would become his surety. It was merely a form, just writing a few words, just “a clasping of the hands” (see marg. *reff.*) in token that the obligation was accepted, and that was all. It would be unfriendly to refuse. And yet, as the teacher warns his hearers, there might be, in that moment of careless weakness, the first link of a long chain of ignominy, galling, fretting, wearing, depriving life of all its peace. The Jewish law of debt, hard and stern like that of most ancient nations, might be enforced against him in all its rigour. Money and land might go, the very bed under him might be seized, and his garment torn from his back (xx. 16, xxii. 27), the older and more lenient law (Ex. xxii. 26-27) having apparently fallen into disuse. He might be brought into a life-long bondage, subject only to the possible relief of

the year of Jubilee, when the people were religious enough to remember and observe it. His wives, his sons, his daughters might be sharers in that slavery (Neh. v. 3-5). It was doubtful whether he could claim the privilege which under Ex. xxi. 2 belonged to an Israelite slave that had been bought. Against such an evil, no warnings could be too frequent or too urgent.

stricken thy hand] The natural symbol of the promise to keep a contract; in this case, to pay another man's debts. Cp. xvii. 18, xxii. 26; Job xvii. 3; Ezek. xvii. 18.

2. Or, “If thou art snared...if thou art taken.” &c.

3. Better, “Do this now, O my son, and free thyself when thou hast come into thy friend's house; go, bow thyself down (perhaps “stamp with thy foot,” or “hasten”), press hotly upon thy friend. By persuasion, and if need be, by threats, get back the bond which thou hast been entrapped into signing.” The “friend” is, as before, the companion, not the creditor.

6. The warning against the wastefulness of the prodigal is followed by a warning as emphatic against the wastefulness of sloth. The point of comparison with the ant is not so much the foresight of the insect as its unwearied activity during the appointed season, rebuking man's inaction at a special crisis (*v.* 4). In xxx. 25, the storing, provident habit of the ant is noticed.

7. The words express the wonder with which the Hebrew observer looked on the phenomena of insect-life. “Guide,” better captain, as in Josh. x. 24. The LXX. introduces here a corresponding reference to the industry of the bee.

11. The similitude is drawn from the two sources of Eastern terror: the “traveller,” *i.e.* “the thief in the night,” coming sud-

- 12 A naughty person, a wicked man,
Walketh with a froward mouth.
- 13 ¹He winketh with his eyes,—he speaketh with his feet,
14 He teacheth with his fingers;—frowardness *is* in his heart,
²He deviseth mischief continually;—³he ¹soweth discord.
- 15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly;
Suddenly shall he ¹be broken ²without remedy.
- 16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate:
Yea, seven *are* an abomination ²unto him:
- 17 ¹³ A proud look, ¹⁴ a lying tongue,
And ¹⁵ hands that shed innocent blood.
- 18 ¹⁶ An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,
¹⁷ Feet that be swift in running to mischief,
19 ¹⁸ A false witness that speaketh lies,
And he ¹⁹ that soweth discord among brethren.
- 20 ²⁰ My son, keep thy father's commandment,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
- 21 ²¹ Bind them continually upon thine heart,
And tie them about thy neck.
- 22 ²² When thou goest, it shall lead thee;
When thou sleepest, ²³ it shall keep thee;
And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.
- 23 ²⁴ For the commandment *is* a ²⁵ lamp; and the law *is* light;
And reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life:
- 24 ²⁶ To keep thee from the evil woman,
From the flattery ²⁷ of the tongue of a strange woman.
- 25 ²⁸ Lust not after her beauty in thine heart;
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.
- 26 For ²⁹ by means of a whorish woman *a man is brought* to a piece ³⁰ of bread:
³¹ And ³² the adulteress will ³³ hunt for the precious life.
- ¹ Heb. *casteth forth*.
² Heb. *of his soul*.
³ Heb. *Haughty eyes*.
⁴ Or, *candle*.
⁵ Or, *of the strange tongue*.
⁶ Heb. *the woman of a man*,
or, *a man's wife*.
⁷ Job 15. 12.
Ps. 35. 19.
ch. 10. 10.
⁸ Mic. 2. 1.
⁹ ver. 19.
¹⁰ Jer. 19. 11.
¹¹ 2 Chr. 36. 18.
¹² Ps. 18. 27.
& 101. 5.
¹³ Ps. 120. 2, 3.
¹⁴ Isai. 1. 15.
¹⁵ Gen. 6. 5.
¹⁶ Isai. 59. 7.
Rom. 3. 15.
¹⁷ Ps. 27. 12.
ch. 19. 5, 9.
¹⁸ ver. 14.
¹⁹ ch. 1. 8.
Eph. 6. 1.
²⁰ ch. 7. 3.
²¹ ch. 3. 23, 24.
²² ch. 2. 11.
²³ Ps. 19. 8.
²⁴ ch. 2. 16.
& 5. 3.
²⁵ 7. 5.
²⁶ Matt. 5. 28.
²⁷ ch. 29. 3.
²⁸ Gen. 39. 14.
²⁹ Ezek. 13. 18.

denly to plunder; the "armed man," lit. "the man of the shield," the armed robber. The habit of indolence is more fatally destructive than these marauders.

12. *A naughty person*] Lit. "a man of Belial," i.e. a worthless man (see Deut. xiii. 13 note). This is the portrait of the man who is not to be trusted, whose look and gestures warn against him all who can observe. His speech is tortuous and crafty; his wink tells the accomplice that the victim is already snared; his gestures with foot and hand are half in deceit, and half in mockery.

15. The dupe and the dupe shall share the same calamity.

16-19. A new section, but not a new subject. The closing words, "he that soweth discord" (v. 19, cp. v. 14), lead us to identify the sketch as taken from the same character. With the recognized Hebrew form of climax (see xxx. 15, 18, 24; Amos i. ii.; Job v. 19), the teacher here enumerates six qualities as detestable, and the seventh as worse than all (seven repre-

senting completeness), but all the seven in this instance belong to one man, the man of Belial (v. 12).

21-22. The thought of iii. 3 carried a step further. No outward charm, but the law of obedience, shall give safety to the traveller, when he sleeps or when he wakes.

23. Cp. Ps. cxix. 105.

24. *evil woman*] Lit. "woman of evil." In reading what follows, it must be remembered that the warning is against the danger of the sin of the adulterous wife.

25. *eyelids*] Possibly pointing to the Eastern custom of painting the eyes on the outside with *kohl* so as to give brightness and languishing expression.

26. The two forms of evil bring, each of them, their own penalty. By the one a man is brought to such poverty as to beg for "a piece of bread" (cp. 1 S. ii. 36): by the other and more deadly sin he incurs a peril which may affect his life. The second clause is very abrupt and emphatic in the original; "but as for a man's wife;—she hunts for the precious life."

- 27 Can a man take fire in his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Can one go upon hot coals,—and his feet not be burned?
29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;
Whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.
30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal
To satisfy his soul when he is hungry; *
• Ex. 22. 1, 4. 31 But if he be found, *he shall restore sevenfold;
He shall give all the substance of his house.
/ ch. 7. 7. 32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman /lacketh ¹under-
standing:
He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
33 A wound and dishonour shall he get;
And his reproach shall not be wiped away.
34 For jealousy is the rage of a man:
Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
35 ²He will not regard any ransom;
Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

CHAP. 7. MY son, keep my words,

- And ^alay up my commandments with thee.
2 ^bKeep my commandments, and live;
*And my law as the apple of thine eye.
3 ^cBind them upon thy fingers,
Write them upon the table of thine heart.
4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister;
And call understanding thy kinswoman:
5 ^cThat they may keep thee from the strange woman, ^c
From the stranger which flattereth with her words.
6 For at the window of my house—I looked through my case-
ment,
7 And beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among ³the youths, a young man /void of under-
standing,
8 Passing through the street near her corner;
And he went the way to her house,
• Job 24. 15. 9 ^eIn the twilight, ⁴in the evening,—in the black and dark night:
10 And, behold, there met him a woman
With the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.
^a ch. 9. 13. 11 (^aShe is loud and stubborn;—⁴her feet abide not in her house:
^e 1 Tim. 5. 13. 12 Now is she without, now in the streets,
Tit. 2. 5. And lieth in wait at every corner.)
13 So she caught him, and kissed him,
And ⁵with an impudent face said unto him,

¹ Heb. heart.

² Heb. He will not accept
the face of any ransom.

³ Heb. the sons.

⁴ Heb. in the evening of the
day.

⁵ Heb. she strengthened her
face, and said.

e

VII. The harlot adulteress of an Eastern city is contrasted with the true feminine ideal of the Wisdom who is to be the "sister" and "kinswoman" (v. 4) of the young man as he goes on his way through life. See ch. viii. introduction.

6. *casement*] The latticed opening of an Eastern house, overlooking the street (cp. Judg. v. 28).

7. *simple*] In the bad sense of the word (i. 22 note); "open" to all impressions of evil, empty-headed and empty-hearted;

lounging near the house of ill-repute, not as yet deliberately purposing to sin, but placing himself in the way of it at a time when the pure in heart would seek their home. There is a certain symbolic meaning in the picture of the gathering gloom (v. 9). Night is falling over the young man's life as the shadows deepen.

11. *loud and stubborn*] Both words describe the half-animal signs of a vicious nature. Cp. Hos. iv. 16.

- 14 ¹ *I have peace offerings with me ;*
This day have I paid my vows.
- 15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
 Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
- 16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry,
 With carved *works*, with ² *fine linen of Egypt.* ² *Isai. 19. 9.*
- 17 I have perfumed my bed—with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
- 18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning :
 Let us solace ourselves with loves.
- 19 For the goodman *is* not at home,—he is gone a long journey :
- 20 He hath taken a bag of money ² with him,
 And will come home at ³ the day appointed.
- 21 With ¹ her much fair speech she caused him to yield,
² With the flattering of her lips she forced him. ¹ *ch. 5. 3.*
² *Ps. 12. 2.*
- 22 He goeth after her ¹ straightway,
 As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
 Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks ;
- 23 Till a dart strike through his liver ;
² As a bird hasteth to the snare,
 And knoweth not that it *is* for his life. ² *Eccl. 9. 12.*
- 24 Harken unto me now therefore, O ye children,
 And attend to the words of my mouth.
- 25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways,
 Go not astray in her paths.
- 26 For she hath cast down many wounded :
 Yea, ² many strong *men* have been slain by her.
- 27 ¹ Her house *is* the way to hell,
 Going down to the chambers of death. ² *Neh. 13. 26.*
¹ *ch. 2. 18.*
² *5. 5.*
³ *9. 18.*

¹ Heb. *Peace offerings* are upon me.

² Heb. *in his hand.*
³ Or, *the new moon.*

⁴ Heb. *suddenly.*

14. This pretence of a religious feast gives us an insight into some strange features of popular religion under the monarchy of Judah. The harlot uses the technical word (Lev. iii. 1) for the "peace-offerings," and makes them the starting-point for her sin. They have to be eaten on the same day that they are offered (Lev. vii. 15, 16), and she invites her victim to the feast. She who speaks is a "foreigner" who, under a show of conformity to the religion of Israel, still retains her old notions (see ii. 16 note), and a feast-day to her is nothing but a time of self-indulgence, which she may invite another to share with her. If we assume, as probable, that these harlots of Jerusalem were mainly of Phœnician origin, the connexion of their worship with their sin would be but the continuation of their original *cultus*.

16. The words point to the art and commerce which flourished under Solomon.

carved works] Most commentators take the original as meaning "striped coverlets of linen of Egypt."

17. The love of perfumes is here, as in *Isai. iii. 24*, a sign of luxurious vice.

cinnamon] The Hebrew word is identical with the English. The spice imported by the Phœnician traders from the further

East, probably from Ceylon, has kept its name through all changes of language.

19. The reference to the husband is probably a blind. The use of the word "goodman" is due to the wish of the English translators to give a colloquial character to this part of their Version. The Heb. is merely "the man." A touch of scorn may be noticed in the form of speech : not "*my* husband," but simply "the man."

21. *fair speech*] The Hebrew word is usually translated "doctrine," or "learning" (i. 5, iv. 2, ix. 9) ; possibly it is used here in keen irony.

22. *as a fool &c.*] Lit. "As a fetter to the correction of a fool," the order of which is inverted in the A.V. The LXX., followed by the Syriac Version, has another reading, and interprets the clause : "As a dog, enticed by food, goes to the chain that is to bind him, so does the youth go to the temptress." None of the attempts of commentators to get a meaning out of the present text are in any degree satisfactory.

23. The first clause does not connect itself very clearly with the foregoing, and is probably affected by the corrupt text which makes it perplexing.

26. The house of the harlot is now likened to a field of battle strewn with the corpses of the many slain.

- ^a ch. 1. 20. **CHAP. 8.** DOTH not ^awisdom cry?
[&] 9. 3. And understanding put forth her voice?
 2 She standeth in the top of high places,
 By the way in the places of the paths.
 3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city,
 At the coming in at the doors.
 4 Unto you, O men, I call;—and my voice is to the sons of man.
 5 O ye simple, understand wisdom:
 And, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.
^b ch. 22. 20. 6 Hear; for I will speak of ^bexcellent things;
 And the opening of my lips *shall be* right things.
 For my mouth shall speak truth;
 And wickedness *is* ¹an abomination to my lips.
 8 All the words of my mouth *are* in righteousness;
There is nothing ²froward or perverse in them.
 9 They *are* all plain to him that understandeth,
 And right to them that find knowledge.
 10 Receive my instruction, and not silver;
 And knowledge, rather than choice gold.
^c Job 28. 15, ^{&c.} 11 ^cFor wisdom *is* better than rubies;
 Ps. 19. 10. And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared
[&] 119. 127. to it.
 ch. 3. 14, 15. 12 I wisdom dwell with ³prudence,
[&] 4. 5, 7. And find out knowledge of witty inventions.
[&] 16. 16. 13 ^dThe fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil:
^d ch. 16. 6. ^ePride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
^e ch. 6. 17. And ^fthe froward mouth, do I hate.
^f ch. 4. 24. 14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom:
 I *am* understanding; ^gI have strength.
^g Eccl. 7. 19. 15 ^hBy me kings reign,—and princes decree justice.
^h Dan. 2. 21. 16 By me princes rule,
ⁱ Rom. 13. 1. And nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.

¹ Heb. *the abomination of my lips.*

² Heb. *wreathed.*

³ Or, *subtily.*

VIII. A companion picture to that in ch. vii., and serving in some measure to generalize and idealize it. Wisdom also calls (v. 5) to the “simple” and the “fools,” and they have to choose between her voice and that of the Temptress.

2, 3. The full enumeration of localities points to the publicity and openness of Wisdom’s teaching (see i. 20 note), as contrasted with the stealth and secrecy and darkness which shroud the harlot’s enticements (vii. 9).

4. *men...sons of man*] The two words are used, which, like *virii* and *homines*, describe the higher and the lower, the stronger and the weaker. Cp. Ps. xlix. 2 note.

6. *excellent*] Lit. “princely things.” The word is not the same as in marg. ref., and is elsewhere always used of persons (cp. “captain” in 1 Sam. ix. 16, 2 Sam. v. 2). The poetic style of this part of the Book applies it here to the things taught, or to the character of the teaching.

8, 9. Words of the ideal Wisdom, which find their highest fulfilment in that of the

Incarnate Word. Cp. Luke iv. 22; Matt. xi. 19.

12. Wisdom first speaks warnings (i. 24 note), next promises (ii. 1 note); but here she neither promises nor threatens, but speaks of her own excellence. “Prudence” is the “subtily” (see marg.), the wiliness of the serpent (Gen. iii. 1), in itself neutral, but capable of being turned to good as well as evil. Wisdom, occupied with things heavenly and eternal, also “dwells with” the practical tact and insight needed for the life of common men. “Witty inventions” are rather *counsels*. The truth intended is, that all special rules for the details of life spring out of the highest Wisdom as their source.

15. Not only the common life of common men, but the exercise of the highest sovereignty, must have this Wisdom as its ground. Cp. with this passage (vv. 15–21) the teaching of 1 K. iii. 5–14. The word rendered “princes” (v. 15) is different from that in v. 16; the first might, perhaps, be rendered “rulers.”

- 17 ¹ I love them that love me ;
 And ² those that seek me early shall find me.
 18 ³ Riches and honour *are* with me ;
Yea, durable riches and righteousness.
 19 ⁴ My fruit *is* better than gold, yea, than fine gold ;
 And my revenue than choice silver.
 20 I ⁵ lead in the way of righteousness,
 In the midst of the paths of judgment :
 21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance ;
 And I will fill their treasures.
 22 ⁶ The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way,
 Before his works of old.
 23 ⁷ I was set up from everlasting,
 From the beginning, or ever the earth was.
 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth ;
 When *there were* no fountains abounding with water.
 25 ⁸ Before the mountains were settled,
 Before the hills was I brought forth :
 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the ⁹ fields,
 Nor ¹⁰ the highest part of the dust of the world.

¹ 1 Sam. 2. 30.
 Ps. 91. 14.
 John 14. 21.
² Jam. 1. 5.
³ ch. 3. 16.
 Matt. 6. 33.
⁴ ch. 3. 14.
 ver. 10.

⁶ ch. 3. 10.

⁷ Ps. 2. 6.

⁸ Job 15. 7, 8.

¹ Or, walk.

² Or, open places.

³ Or, the chief part.

18. *durable riches*] *i.e.* Treasure piled up for many years, *ancient* wealth.

19. *gold*] The "choice, fine gold" of marg. refl. The "fine gold" in the second clause is a different word, and perhaps represents gold extracted from the ore.

22. A verse which has played an important part in the history of Christian dogma. Wisdom reveals herself as preceding all creation, stamped upon it all, one with God, yet in some way distinguishable from Him as the object of His love (v. 30). St. John declares that all which Wisdom here speaks of herself was true in its highest sense of the Word that became flesh (John i. 1-14) : just as Apostles afterwards applied Wisd. vii. 22-30 to Christ (cp. Col. i. 15 ; Heb. i. 3).

possessed] The word has acquired a special prominence in connexion with the Arian controversy. The meaning which it usually bears is that of "getting" (Gen. iv. 1), "buying" (Gen. xlvii. 22), "possessing" (Jer. xxxii. 15). In this sense one of the oldest Divine names was that of "Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. xiv. 19, 22). But the idea of thus "getting" or "possessing" involved, as a Divine act in relation to the universe, the idea of creation, and thus in one or two passages the word might be rendered, though not accurately, by "created" (*e.g.* Ps. cxxxix. 13). It would seem accordingly as if the Greek translators of the Old Testament oscillated between the two meanings ; and in this passage we find the various renderings *ἐκτίσας* "created" (LXX.), and *ἐκρίσασα* "possessed" (Aquila). The text with the former word naturally became one of the stock arguments of the Arians against the eternal co-existence of the Son, and the

other translation was as vehemently defended by the orthodox Fathers. Athanasius receiving *ἐκτίσεν*, took it in the sense of appointing, and saw in the LXX. a declaration that the Father had made the Son the "chief," the "head," the "sovereign," over all creation. There does not seem indeed any ground for the thought of creation either in the meaning of the root, or in the general usage of the word. What is meant in this passage is that we cannot think of God as ever having been without Wisdom. She is "as the beginning of His ways." So far as the words bear upon Christian dogma they accord with the words of John i. 1, "the Word was with God." The next words indeed assert priority to all the works of God, from the first starting-point of time.

23. *I was set up*] Rather, "I was anointed" (cp. Ps. ii. 6 marg. : 2 Chr. xxviii. 15). The image is that of Wisdom anointed, as at her birth, with "the oil of gladness."

or ever the earth was] Lit. "from the times before the earth."

24. Cp. Gen. i. ; Job xxii. xxvi., xxxviii. A world of waters, "great deeps" lying in darkness, this was the picture of the remotest time of which man could form any conception, and yet the co-existence of the uncreated Wisdom with the eternal Jehovah was before that.

25. Cp. Ps. xc. 2. What the Psalmist said of Jehovah, the teacher here asserts of Wisdom ; she was before the everlasting hills.

26. *the highest part of the dust of the world*] Lit. "the head of the dusts of the world ;" an image of either (1) the dry land, habitable, fit for cultivation, as con-

- 27 When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there :
When he set ¹a compass upon the face of the depth :
- 28 When he established the clouds above :
When he strengthened the fountains of the deep :
- 29 ^aWhen he gave to the sea his decree,
That the waters should not pass his commandment :
When ^rhe appointed the foundations of the earth :
- 30 ^aThen I was by him, *as one brought up with him* :
^aAnd I was daily *his* delight,—rejoicing always before him ;
- 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ;
And ^amy delights *were* with the sons of men.
- 32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children :
For ^ablessed *are they that keep my ways*.
- 33 Hear instruction, and be wise,—and refuse it not.
- 34 ^vBlessed *is* the man that heareth me,
Watching daily at my gates,—waiting at the posts of my doors.
- 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life,
And shall ²obtain favour of the LORD.
- 36 But he that sinneth against me ^awrongeth his own soul :
All they that hate me love death.
- CHAP. 9. WISDOM** hath ^abuilded her house,
She hath hewn out her seven pillars :
2 She hath killed ³her beasts ; ^ashe hath mingled her wine ;
She hath also furnished her table.
3 She hath ^dsent forth her maidens :
^aShe crieth ^vupon the highest places of the city,
4 ^aWhoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither :
As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
- ¹ Or, *a circle.* ² Heb. *bring forth.* ³ Heb. *her killing.*

trasted with the waters of the chaotic deep ;
or (2) man himself. Cp. Eccles. iii. 20.

27. *a compass*] Better as in the marg. and Job xxii. 14 (see note), i.e. the great vault of heaven stretched over the deep seas.

30. *as one brought up with him*] i.e. As his foster child. Others take the word in the original in another sense, "I was as his artificer," a rendering which falls in best with the special point of the whole passage, the creative energy of Wisdom. Cp. Wisd. vii. 21, 22.

daily] Heb. "day by day." As the Creator rejoiced in His workmanship (Gen. i. 4, 10, 12, 13), so Wisdom rejoiced in the exuberance of her might and strength.

31. Wisdom rejoices yet more in the world as inhabited by God's rational creatures (cp. Isai. xlv. 18). Giving joy and delight to God, she finds her delight among the sons of men. These words, like the rest, are as an unconscious prophecy fulfilled in the Divine Word, in whom were "hid all the treasures of Wisdom." Cp. marg. ref. : in Him the Father was well pleased ; and yet His "joy also is fulfilled," not in the glory of the material universe, but in His work among the sons of men.

32. The old exhortation with a new force. The counsels are no longer those of

prudence and human experience, but of a Wisdom eternal as Jehovah, ordering all things.

34. The image is suggested probably by the Levites who guarded the doors of the sanctuary (Pss. cxxxiv. 1, cxxxv. 2). Not less blessed than theirs is the lot of those who wait upon Wisdom in the Temple not made with hands.

35. Wisdom then is the only true life. The Word, the Light, is also the Life of man (John i. 4). The eternal life is to know God and Christ (John xvii. 3).

IX. 1. A parable full of beauty, and interesting in its parallelism to the parables of our Lord (Matt. xxii. 3, 4 ; Luke xiv. 16).

seven pillars] The number is chosen as indicating completeness and perfection. God revealing Himself in nature, resting in His work, entering into covenant with men,—these were the ideas conveyed by it.

2. *mingled her wine*] i.e. with myrrh and other spices, to give flavour and strength.

3. Wisdom and the "foolish woman" (v. 13) speak from the same places and to the same class—the simple, undecided, wavering, standing at the diverging point of the two paths that lead to life or death.

- 5 ^h Come, eat of my bread,
And drink of the wine *which* I have mingled.
- 6 Forsake the foolish, and live;
And go in the way of understanding.
- 7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame:
And he that rebuketh a wicked *man* getteth himself a blot.
- 8 ⁱ Reprove not a scormer, lest he hate thee:
^k Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.
- 9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man*, and he will be yet wiser:
Teach a just *man*, ^l and he will increase in learning.
- 10 ^m The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom:
And the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.
- 11 ⁿ For by me thy days shall be multiplied,
And the years of thy life shall be increased.
- 12 ^o ^p If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself:
But *if* thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear *it*.
- 13 ^q A foolish woman *is* clamorous:
She is simple, and knoweth nothing.
- 14 For she sitteth at the door of her house,
On a seat ^r in the high places of the city,
- 15 To call passengers—who go right on their ways:
16 ^r Whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither:
And *as* for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
- 17 ^s Stolen waters are sweet,—and bread ^t eaten in secret is pleasant.
- 18 But he knoweth not that ^u the dead *are* there;
And *that* her guests *are* in the depths of hell.

^h ver. 2.
Cant. 5. 1.
Isai. 55. 1.

ⁱ Matt. 7. 6.
^k Ps. 141. 5.

^l Matt. 13. 12.
^m Job 28. 28.
Ps. 111. 10.
ch. 1. 7.
ⁿ ch. 3. 2, 16.
& 10. 27.
^o Job 35. 6, 7.
ch. 16. 26.

ch. 7. 11.

^q ver. 3.

^r ver. 4.

^s ch. 20. 17.
^t ch. 2. 18.
& 7. 27.

^u ch. 15. 20.
& 17. 21, 23.
& 19. 13.
& 29. 3, 15.

CHAP. 10. THE proverbs of Solomon.

^a A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother.

¹ Heb. of *secrecies*.

5. A parallel to the higher teaching of the Gospels (cp. John vi. 27; Matt. xxvi. 26).
7-9. These verses seem somewhat to interrupt the continuity of the invitation which Wisdom utters. The order of thought is, however, this: "I speak to you, the simple, the open ones, for you have yet ears to hear: but from the scorner or evil doer, as such, I turn away." The words are illustrated by Matt. xiii. 11 &c.

10. *the holy* The word in the Heb. is plural, agreeing, probably, with *Elohim* understood (so in xxx. 3). The knowledge of the Most Holy One stands as the counterpart of the fear of Jehovah.

12. The great law of personal retribution (cp. Matt. vii. 2). The LXX. makes a curious addition to this verse, "My son, if thou wilt be wise for thyself, thou shalt be wise also for thy neighbours; but if thou turn out evil, thou alone shalt bear evil. He who resteth on lies shall guide the winds, and the same shall hunt after winged birds; for he hath left the ways of his own vineyard, and has gone astray with the wheels of his own husbandry. He goeth through a wilderness without water, and over a land set in thirsty places, and with his hands he gathereth barrenness."

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13. The picture of the harlot as the representative of the sensual life, the Folly between which and Wisdom the young man has to make his choice (r. 3 note). "Simple," in the worst sense, as open to all forms of evil. "Knoweth nothing," ignorant with the ignorance which is wilful and reckless.

14. Contrast with r. 1 &c. The foolish woman has her house, but it is no stately palace with seven pillars, like the home of Wisdom. No train of maidens wait on her, and invite her guests, but she herself sits at the door, her position as prominent as that of Wisdom, counterfeiting her voice, making the same offer to the same class (cp. v. 16 with r. 4).

17. The besetting sin of all times and countries, the one great proof of the inherent corruption of man's nature. Pleasures are attractive *because* they are forbidden (cp. Rom. vii. 7).

18. Cp. marg. reff. With this warning the long introduction closes, and the collection of separate proverbs begins. Wisdom and Folly have each spoken; the issues of each have been painted in life-like hues. The learner is left to choose.

X. 1. See Introduction, p. 341.

B B

- ^b Ps. 40. 6, &c.
 ch. 11. 4.
 Luke 12. 19, 20.
^c Dan. 4. 27.
^d Ps. 10. 14.
 & 34. 9, 10.
 & 37. 25.
^e ch. 12. 24.
 & 19. 15.
^f ch. 13. 4.
 & 21. 5.
^g ch. 12. 4.
 & 17. 2.
 & 19. 26.
^h ver. 11.
ⁱ Ps. 9. 5, 6.
 & 112. 6.
 Eccl. 8. 10.
^k ver. 10.
^l Ps. 23. 4.
 ch. 28. 18.
 Isai. 33. 15, 16.
^m ch. 6. 13.
ⁿ ver. 8.
^o Ps. 37. 30.
 ch. 13. 14.
 & 18. 4.
^p Ps. 107. 42.
^q ch. 17. 9.
^r Cor. 13. 4.
^s 1 Pet. 4. 8.
^t ch. 26. 3.
^u ch. 18. 7.
 & 21. 23.
- 2 ^bTreasures of wickedness profit nothing :
 'But righteousness delivereth from death.
- 3 ^dThe LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish :
 But he casteth away ^lthe substance of the wicked.
- 4 ^eHe becometh poor that dealeth *with* a slack hand :
 But ^fthe hand of the diligent maketh rich.
- 5 He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son :
 But he that sleepeth in harvest *is* a son that causeth shame.
- 6 Blessings *are* upon the head of the just :
 But ^hviolence covereth the mouth of the wicked.
- 7 ⁱThe memory of the just *is* blessed :
 But the name of the wicked shall rot.
- 8 The wise in heart will receive commandments :
^kBut ^la prating fool ^mshall fall.
- 9 ⁿHe that walketh uprightly walketh surely :
 But he that perverteth his ways shall be known.
- 10 ^oHe that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow :
^pBut a prating fool ^qshall fall.
- 11 ^rThe mouth of a righteous *man* *is* a well of life :
 But ^sviolence covereth the mouth of the wicked.
- 12 Hatred stirreth up strifes :—but ^tlove covereth all sins.
- 13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found :
 But ^ua rod *is* for the back of him that is void of ^vunderstanding.
- 14 Wise *men* lay up knowledge :
 But ^wthe mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.

¹ Or, *the wicked for their wickedness.*

² Heb. *a fool of lips.*
³ Or, *shall be beaten.*

⁴ Or, *shall be beaten.*
⁵ Heb. *heart.*

2. *righteousness*] Including, perhaps, the idea of benevolence. Cp. the use of *δικαιοσύνη*, in Matt. vi. 1 (the older reading), and 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10.

3. *casteth away* &c.] Better, "overturns, disappoints the strong desire of the wicked." Tantalus-like, they never get the enjoyment they thirst after.

4. *slack*] The word is elsewhere translated as "deceitful" (Job xiii. 7; Ps. cxx. 2, 3; Hos. vii. 16; Jer. xlviii. 10). The two thoughts run easily into each other.

5. The son is called upon to enter on the labours of others, and reap where they have sown. To sleep when the plenteous harvest lies ready for the sickle is the extreme sloth.

6. *covereth* &c.] The meaning is perhaps, the violence which the wicked has done is as a bandage over his mouth, reducing him to a silence and shame, like that of the leper (Lev. xiii. 45; Mic. iii. 7) or the condemned criminal (Esth. vii. 8), whose "face is covered."

8. *a prating...fall*] Better, as in the marg. Inward self-contained wisdom is contrasted with self-exposed folly.

9. *shall be known*] Lit. "shall be made

to know" (see Jer. xxxi. 19; Judg. viii. 16 marg.) in the sense of exposed.

10. In v. 8 the relation between the two clauses was one of contrast, here of resemblance. Cunning, reticence, and deceit (vi. 12 note) bring sorrow no less than garrulity.

11. Cp. v. 6. Streams of living water (like the "fountain of living waters" of Jer. ii. 13, xvii. 13, and the "living water" of John iv. 10), flow from the mouth of the righteous, but that of the wicked is "covered," i.e. stopped and put to silence by their own violence.

12. *love covereth all sins*] i.e. First hides, does not expose, and then forgives and forgets all sins.

13. i.e. The wisdom of the wise is seen in the words that issue from his lips; the folly of the fool is not only seen in his speech, but brings upon him the chastisement which he well deserves.

14. *lay up*] The point of the maxim is that the wise man reserves what he has to say for the right time, place, and persons (cp. Matt. vii. 6), as contrasted with the foolish, ever giving immediate utterance to what destroys himself and others.

- 15 ^aThe rich man's wealth *is* his strong city :
^bThe destruction of the poor *is* their poverty.
- 16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life :
 The fruit of the wicked to sin.
- 17 He *is in* the way of life that keepeth instruction :
 But he that refuseth reproof ¹erreth.
- 18 He that hideth hatred *with* lying lips,
 And ^ahe that uttereth a slander, *is* a fool.
- 19 ^aIn the multitude of words there wanteth not sin .
 But ^bhe that refraineth his lips *is* wise.
- 20 The tongue of the just *is as* choice silver :
 The heart of the wicked *is* little worth.
- 21 The lips of the righteous feed many :
 But fools die for want ²of wisdom.
- 22 ^aThe blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich,
 And he addeth no sorrow with it.
- 23 ^a*It is* as sport to a fool to do mischief :
 But a man of understanding hath wisdom.
- 24 ^bThe fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him :
 But ^cthe desire of the righteous shall be granted.
- 25 As the whirlwind passeth, ^aso *is* the wicked no more :
 But ^cthe righteous *is* an everlasting foundation.

^a Job 31. 24.
 Ps. 52. 7.
 1 Tim. 6. 17.

^a Ps. 15. 3.

^a Eccl. 5. 3.
^b Jam. 3. 2.

^a Gen. 24. 35.
 & 26. 12.
 Ps. 37. 22.
^c ch. 14. 9.
 & 15. 21.
^b Job 15. 21.
^c Ps. 145. 10.
 Matt. 5. 6.
 1 John 5.
 14. 15.
^a Ps. 37. 9.
 10.
^c Ps. 15. 5.
 ver. 30.
 Matt. 16. 18.

• ¹ Or, *causeth to err.*

² Heb. *of heart.*

15. *destruction*] That which crushes, throws into ruins. Wealth secures its possessors against many dangers ; poverty exposes men to worse evils than itself, meanness, servility, and cowardice. Below the surface there lies, it may be, a grave irony against the rich ; see xviii. 11.

16. A warning against the conclusion to seek wealth first of all, which men of lower natures might draw from v. 15.

"Querenda pecunia primum est ;
 Virtus post nummos !"

Horace, 'Ep.' 1. i. 53.

Such an inference is met by the experience, that while wealth gotten by honest industry is not only, like inherited riches a defence, but also a blessing, the seeming **profit** (rather than "fruit") of the wicked tends to further sin (1 Tim. vi. 10), and so to punishment. Cp. Rom. vi. 21.

17. Lit. **A way of life is he that keepeth instruction.** The verb "ereth" is better rendered in the margin. The influence for good or evil spreads beyond the man himself.

18. Better, **He who hideth hatred is of lying lips.** He who cherishes hatred, is either a knave, or a fool—a knave if he hides, a fool if he utters it.

19. *there wanteth not sin*] Some render this, "Sin shall not cease," &c., i.e. many words do not mend a fault. Silence on the part both of the reprover and the offender is often better. The A. V. is, however, preferable.

20. The tongue, the instrument of the mind is contrasted with the heart or mind itself, the just with the wicked, the choice silver with the worthless "little," the Heb. word being possibly taken in its primary sense as a "filing" or "scraping" of dross or worthless metal. If the tongue is precious, how much more the mind ! If the heart is worthless, how much more the speech !

21. *feed*] The Heb. word, like *noûpaivew*, includes the idea of guiding as well as nourishing ; doing a shepherd's work in both.

for want of wisdom] Some prefer, **through him who wanteth understanding**, referring to a person. The wise guides others to safety ; the fool, empty-headed, and empty-hearted, involves others like himself in destruction.

23. As the fool finds his sport in doing mischief, so the man of understanding finds in wisdom his truest refreshment and delight.

24. *The fear*] i.e. The thing feared (cp. marg. ref.).
shall be granted] Or, **He (Jehovah) giveth the desire of the righteous.**

25. Or, **when the whirlwind is passing, then the wicked is no more.** Cp. Matt. vii. 24-27.

the righteous &c.] In the later Rabbinic interpretation this was applied to the Messiah as being the Just One, the Everlasting Foundation, on Whom the world was established.

- 26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
So *is* the sluggard to them that send him.
- ^f ch. 9. 11. 27 'The fear of the LORD ¹prolongeth days:
^v Job 15. 32, But ²the years of the wicked shall be shortened.
33. 28 The hope of the righteous *shall be* gladness:
& 22. 16. But the ³expectation of the wicked shall *perish*.
Ps. 55. 23.
- Eccl. 7. 17. 29 The way of the LORD *is* strength to the upright:
^h Job 8. 13. 'But destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.
& 11. 20.
- Ps. 112. 10. 30 ^kThe righteous shall never be removed:
ch. 11. 7. But the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.
' Ps. 1. 6.
- & 37. 20. 31 'The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom:
^k Ps. 37. 22, But the froward tongue shall be cut out.
29.
- & 125. 1. 32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable:
ver. 25. But the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* ²frowardness.
' Ps. 37. 30.
- CHAP. 11.** A ^aFALSE balance *is* abomination to the LORD:
^a Lev. 19. 35, But ⁴a just weight *is* his delight.
36.
- ^b ch. 15. 33. 2 ^bWhen pride cometh, then cometh shame:
& 16. 18. But with the lowly *is* wisdom.
& 18. 12.
- Dan. 4. 30, 31. 3 'The integrity of the upright shall guide them:
^c ch. 13. 6. But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.
- ^d ch. 10. 2. 4 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath:
Kzek. 7. 19. But ^crighteousness delivereth from death.
^e Gen. 7. 1.
- 5 The righteousness of the perfect shall ⁵direct his way:^f
But the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.
- 6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them:
But ^ftransgressors shall be taken in *their own* naughtiness.
- ¹ Heb. *addeth*. ³ Heb. *Balances of deceit*. ⁵ Heb. *rectify*.
² Heb. *frowardnesses*. ⁴ Heb. *a perfect stone*.

26. The teeth set on edge by the sour wine used by peasants (Ruth ii. 14; Ps. lxxix. 21), the eye irritated by wood-smoke, these shadow the annoyance of having a messenger who *will* loiter on the way.

28. Transpose "hope" and "expectation." The expectant waiting of the righteous is joyful at the time, and ends in joy: the eager hope of the wicked comes to nought.

29. Omit "shall be." The meaning is: "The Way of Jehovah," *i.e.* the Divine Order of the world, has its two sides. It is "strength to the upright, destruction to the workers of iniquity."

30. *the wicked shall not inhabit*] The other and higher side of the same law of the Divine Government appears in Matt. v. 5.

31. *bringeth forth &c.*] As a tree full of life and sap brings forth its fruit. So the "froward tongue" is like a tree that brings forth evil and not good fruit; it "shall be cut down." The abuse of God's gift of speech will lead ultimately to its forfeiture. There shall, at last, be the silence of shame and confusion.

32. *know*] *i.e.* "Know, and therefore utter." So, in like manner, the "mouth

of the wicked" **knows**, and therefore speaks frowardness, and that only.

XI. 1. This emphatic reproduction of the old rule of Deut. xxv. 13, 14 is perhaps a trace of the danger of dishonesty incidental to the growing commerce of the Israelites. The stress laid on the same sin in xvi. 11, xx. 10, bears witness to the desire of the teacher to educate the youth of Israel to a high standard of integrity, just as the protest of Hosea against it (xii. 7) shews the zeal of the prophet in rebuking what was becoming more and more a besetting sin.

a just weight] Lit., as in the marg., indicating a time when stones rather than metal were used as a standard of weight. Cp. Deut. xxv. 13.

2. A Rabbinic paraphrase of the second clause is: "Lowly souls become full of wisdom as the low place becomes full of water."

4. *the day of wrath*] Words true in their highest sense of the great "dies iræ" of the future, but spoken, in the first instance (cp. Zeph. i. 15-18) of any "day of the Lord," any time of judgment, when men or nations receive the chastisement of their sins. At such a time "riches profit not."

- 7 ^oWhen a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish : ° ch. 10. 28.
 And the hope of unjust *men* perisheth.
- 8 ^aThe righteous is delivered out of trouble,
 And the wicked cometh in his stead. ° ch. 21. 18.
- 9 An ⁱhypocrite with *his* mouth destroyeth his neighbour :
 But through knowledge shall the just be delivered. ° Job 8. 13.
- 10 ^kWhen it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth :
 And when the wicked perish, *there is* shouting. ° Esth. 8. 15.
ch. 28. 12, 28.
- 11 ⁱBy the blessing of the upright the city is exalted :
 But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. ° ch. 29. 8.
- 12 He that is ⁱvoid of wisdom despiseth his neighbour :
 But a man of understanding holdeth his peace.
- 13 ^mA talebearer revealeth secrets : ° Lev. 19. 16.
ch. 20. 19.
 But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.
- 14 ⁿWhere no counsel *is*, the people fall :
 But in the multitude of counsellors *there is* safety. ° ch. 15. 22.
& 24. 6.
- 15 ^oHe that is surety for a stranger ³shall smart *for it* :
 And he that hateth ⁴suretiship is sure. ° ch. 6. 1.
- 16 ^pA gracious woman retaineth honour : ° ch. 31. 30.
 And strong *men* retain riches.
- 17 ^qThe merciful man doeth good to his own soul :
 But *he that is* cruel troubleth his own flesh. ° Matt. 5. 7.
& 25. 34, &c.
- 18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work :
 But ^rto him that soweth righteousness *shall be* a sure reward. ° Hos. 10. 12.
Gal. 6. 8, 9.
Jam. 3. 18.
- 19 As righteousness *tendeth* to life :
 So he that pursueth evil *pursueth it* to his own death.
- 20 They that are of a froward heart *are* abomination to the LORD :
 But *such as* are upright in *their way* *are* his delight.
- 21 ^sThough hand *join* in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished : ° ch. 16. 5.
 But ^tthe seed of the righteous shall be delivered. ° Ps. 112. 2.

¹ Heb. *destitute of heart.*

being a talebearer.

⁴ Heb. *those that strike hands.*

² Heb. *He that walketh,*

³ Heb. *shall be sore broken.*

7. Significant words, as showing the belief that when the righteous died, his "expectation" (*i.e.* his hope for the future) did not perish. The second clause is rendered by some, "the expectation that brings sorrow."

9. *through knowledge*] Better, **By the knowledge of the just, shall they** (*i.e.* the neighbours) **be delivered.**

11. *the blessing of the upright*] Probably the prayers which he offers for the good of the city in which he dwells, and which avail to preserve it from destruction (cp: Gen. xviii. 23-33); or "the blessing which God gives the upright."

12. None but the man "void of wisdom" will show contempt for those about him. The wise man, if he cannot admire or praise, will at least know how to be silent.

13. The man who comes to us with tales about others will reveal our secrets also. Faithfulness is shown, not only in doing what a man has been commissioned to do, but in doing it quietly and without garrulity.

14. *counsel*] See i. 5 note. This precept may well be thought of as coming with special force at the time of the organization of the monarchy of Israel. Cp. 1 K. xii. 6.

15. See marg. ref. The play upon "sure" and "suretiship" in the A.V. (though each word is rightly rendered) has nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew, and seems to have originated in a desire to give point to the proverb.

16. Or, "The gracious woman wins and keeps honour, *as* (the conjunction may be so rendered) strong men win riches."

18. *deceitful work*] Work which deceives and disappoints the worker; in contrast with the "sure reward" of the second clause.

Omit "shall be" and render, "but he that soweth righteousness worketh a sure reward."

• 21. Lit. "hand to hand." The meaning of which is, "Hand may plight faith to hand, men may confederate for evil, yet punishment shall come at last;" or "From

- 22 *As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a fair woman which 'is without discretion.*
- 23 The desire of the righteous *is* only good :
But the expectation of the wicked *'is* wrath.
- ^v Rom. 2. 8, 9. 24 There is that ²scattereth, and yet increaseth ;
² Ps. 112. 9. And *there is* that withholdeth more than *is* meet, but *it tendeth* to poverty.
- ^v 2 Cor. 9. 0, 7, 8, 9, 10. 25 ^{v2} The liberal soul shall be made fat :
² And he that watereth shall be watered also himself
- ^v Matt. 6. 7. 26 ^a He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him :
^a Amos 8. But ^b blessing *shall be* upon the head of him that selleth *it*.
- ^v Job 29. 13. 27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour :
^c But he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.
- ^c Esth. 7. 10. 28 ^d He that trusteth in his riches shall fall :
^d Ps. 7. 15. But ^e the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
- ^d Job 31. 24. 29 He that troubleth his own house ^f shall inherit the wind :
^f Ps. 62. 7. And the fool *shall be* servant to the wise of heart.
- ^e Mark 10. 24. 30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life ;
^e Luke 12. 21. And ^g he that ³ winneth souls *is* wise.
- ^f Tim. 6. 17. 31 ^h Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth :
^g Jer. 17. 8. Much more the wicked and the sinner.
- ^h Eccl. 5. 16. **CHAP. 12. WHOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge :**
^h Dan. 12. 3. But he that hateth reproof *is* brutish.
ⁱ 1 Cor. 9. 19, &c.
ⁱ Jam. 5. 20.
^j Jer. 25. 20.

¹ Heb. *departeth from.*² Heb. *The soul of blessing.*³ Heb. *taketh.*

hand to hand, from one generation to another, punishment shall descend on the evil doers."

22. The most direct proverb, in the sense of "similitude," which has as yet met us. *jewel of gold*] Better, **ring**; i.e. the nose-ring (Gen. xxiv. 22, 47; Isai. iii. 21).

without discretion] Lit. "without taste," void of the subtle tact and grace, without which mere outward beauty is as ill-bestowed as the nose-ring in the snout of the unclean beast. If we may assume that in ancient Syria, as in modern Europe, swine commonly wore such a ring to hinder them doing mischief, the similitude receives a fresh vividness.

24. *withholdeth more than is meet*] i.e. Is sparing and niggardly where he ought to give. The contrast is stated in the form of a paradox, to which the two following verses supply the answer. Some render, "There is that withholdeth from what is due," i.e. from a just debt, or from the generosity of a just man.

25. *liberal soul*] Lit. "the soul that blesses," i.e. gives freely and fully. The similitudes are both of them essentially Eastern. Fatness, the sleek, well-filled look of health, becomes the figure of prosperity, as leanness of misfortune (xiii. 6, xxviii. 25; Ps. xxii. 29; Isai. x. 16). Kindly acts come as the refreshing dew and soft rain from heaven upon a thirsty land.

26. In the early stages of commerce there seems no way of making money rapidly so sure as that of buying up corn in time of dearth, waiting till the dearth presses heavily, and then selling at famine prices. Men hate this selfishness, and pour blessings upon him who sells at a moderate profit.

27. *procureth*] Better, **striveth after**. He who desires good, absolutely, for its own sake, is also unconsciously striving after the favour which attends goodness.

28. *branch*] Better, **leaf**, as in Ps. i. 3; Isai. xxxiv. 4.

29. *He that troubleth &c.*] The temper, niggardly and worrying, which leads a man to make those about him miserable, and proves but bad economy in the end.

30. *winneth souls*] Better, **a wise man winneth souls**. He that is wise draws the souls of men to himself, just as the fruit of the righteous is to all around him a tree of life, bearing new fruits of healing evermore. The phrase is elsewhere translated by "taketh the life" (1 K. xix. 4; Ps. xxxi. 13). The wise man is the true conqueror. For the Christian meaning given to these words see N. T. reff. in marg.

31. The sense would appear to be, "The righteous is required, i.e. is punished for his lesser sins, or as a discipline; much more the wicked, &c." Cp. 1 Pet. iv. 18.

XII. 1. *brutish*] Dumb as a brute beast. The difference between man and brute lies

- 2 ^a A good *man* obtaineth favour of the LORD :
But a man of wicked devices will he condemn. ^a ch. 8. 35.
- 3 A *man* shall not be established by wickedness :
But the ^broot of the righteous shall not be moved. ^b ch. 10. 25.
- 4 ^c A virtuous woman *is* a crown to her husband :
But she that maketh ^dashamed *is* ^eas rottenness in his bones. ^c ch. 31. 23.
^d 1 Cor. 11. 7.
^e ch. 14. 30.
- 5 The thoughts of the righteous *are* right :
But the counsels of the wicked *are* deceit.
- 6 ^f The words of the wicked *are* to lie in wait for blood :
But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them. ^f ch. 1. 11,
18.
^g ch. 14. 3.
- 7 ^g The wicked are overthrown, and *are* not :
But the house of the righteous shall stand. ^g Ps. 37: 36,
37.
ch. 11. 21.
- 8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom :
But he that is ^hof a perverse heart shall be despised. Matt. 7. 24,
25, 26, 27.
^h 1 Sam. 25.
17.
- 9 ⁱ He that *is* despised, and hath a servant,
Is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread. ⁱ ch. 13. 7.
- 10 ^k A righteous *man* regardeth the life of his beast :
But the ^ltender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel. ^k Deut. 25. 4.
- 11 ^m He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread :
But he that followeth vain *persons* ⁿis void of understanding. ^m Gen. 3. 19.
ch. 28. 19.
ⁿ ch. 6. 32.
- 12 The wicked desireth ^othe net of evil *men* :
But the root of the righteous yieldeth *fruit*.
- 13 ^p The wicked is snared by the transgression of *his* lips :
^q But the just shall come out of trouble. ^p ch. 18. 7.
^q 2 Pet. 2. 9.

¹ Heb. *perverse of heart*.

² Or, *bowels*.

³ Or, *the fortress*.

⁴ Heb. *The snare of the*

wicked is in the transgression of lips.

chiefly in the capacity of the former for progress and improvement, and that capacity depends upon his willingness to submit to discipline and education. Cp. Ps. xlix. 12.

4. *virtuous*] The word implies the virtue of earnestness, or strength of character, rather than of simple chastity.

a crown] With the Jews the sign, not of kingly power only, but also of joy and gladness. Cp. S. of S. iii. 11.

6. *shall deliver them*] *i.e.* The righteous themselves.

9. Two interpretations are equally tenable; (1) as in the A.V., He whom men despise, or who is "lowly" in his own eyes (cp. 1 S. xviii. 23), if he has a slave, *i.e.* if he is one step above absolute poverty, and has some one to supply his wants, is better off than the man who boasts of rank or descent and has nothing to eat. Respectable mediocrity is better than boastful poverty. (2) He who, though despised, is a servant to himself, *i.e.* supplies his own wants, is better than the arrogant and helpless.

10. *regardeth*] Lit. "knoweth." All true sympathy and care must grow out of knowledge. The duty of a man to animals (1) rests upon direct commandments in the Law (Ex. xx. 10, xxiii. 4, 5); (2) connects

itself with the thought that the mercies of God are over all His works, and that man's mercy, in proportion to its excellence, must be like His (Jonah iv. 11); and (3) has perpetuated its influence in the popular morality of the East.

tender mercies] Better, "the feelings, the emotions," all that should have led to mercy and pity towards man.

11. The contrast is carried on between the life of industry and that of the idle, "vain person" of the "baser sort" (the "Raca" of Matt. v. 22). We might have expected that the second clause would have ended with such words as "shall lack bread," but the contrast goes deeper. Idleness leads to a worse evil than that of hunger.

12. The meaning seems to be:—The "net of evil men" (cp. i. 17) is that in which they are taken, the judgment of God in which they are ensnared. This they run into with such a blind infatuation, that it seems as if they were in love with their own destruction. The marginal rendering gives the thought that the wicked seek the protection of others like themselves, but seek in vain; the "root of the just" (*i.e.* that in them which is fixed and stable) alone yields that protection.

PROVERBS. XII.

- ^r ch. 18. 20. 14 ^r *A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth :*
^e Isai. 3. 10, *And the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto*
 11. *him.*
- ^r ch. 3. 7. 15 ^r *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes :*
 Luke 18. 11. *But he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*
- ^r ch. 23. 11. 16 ^r *A fool's wrath is presently known :*
But a prudent man covereth shame.
- ^r ch. 14. 5. 17 ^r *He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness :*
But a false witness deceit.
- ^r Ps. 57. 4. 18 ^r *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword :*
 & 59. 7. *But the tongue of the wise is health.*
 & 64. 3.
- ^r Ps. 52. 5. 19 ^r *The lip of truth shall be established for ever :*
 ch. 19. 9. *But a lying tongue is but for a moment.*
- 20 *Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil :*
But to the counsellors of peace is joy.
- 21 *There shall no evil happen to the just :*
But the wicked shall be filled with mischief.
- ^r ch. 6. 17. 22 ^r *Lying lips are abomination to the LORD :*
 & 11. 20. *But they that deal truly are his delight.*
 Rev. 22. 15.
- ^r ch. 13. 16. 23 ^r *A prudent man concealeth knowledge :*
 & 15. 2. *But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.*
- ^r ch. 10. 4. 24 ^r *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule :*
But the slothful shall be under tribute.
- ^r ch. 15. 13. 25 ^r *Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop :*
 & Isai. 60. 4. *But a good word maketh it glad.*
- 26 *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour :*
But the way of the wicked seduceth them.
- 27 *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting :*
But the substance of a diligent man is precious.
- 28 *In the way of righteousness is life ;*
And in the pathway thereof there is no death.

¹ Heb. *in that day.*

² Or, *deceitful.*

³ Or, *abundant.*

14. See xiii. 2 note.

16. The "fool" cannot restrain his wrath ; it rushes on "presently" (as in the margin, **on the same day**), however uselessly. The prudent man knows that to utter his indignation at reproach and shame will but lead to a fresh attack, and takes refuge in reticence.

17. The thought which lies below the surface is that of the inseparable union between truth and justice. The end does not justify the means, and only he who breathes and utters truth makes the righteous cause clear.

20. The "deceit" of "those who imagine evil" can work nothing but evil to those whom they advise. The "counsellors of peace" have joy in themselves, and impart it to others also.

23. Another aspect of the truth of x. 14.

24. *under tribute*] The comparison is pro-

bably suggested by the contrast between the condition of a conquered race (cp. Josh. xvi. 10 ; Judg. i. 30-33), and that of the freedom of their conquerors from such burdens. The proverb indicates that beyond all political divisions of this nature there lies an ethical law. The "slothful" descend inevitably to pauperism and servitude. The prominence of compulsory labour under Solomon (1 K. ix. 21) gives a special significance to the illustration.

26. *is more excellent than*] Rather, **the just man guides his neighbour.**

27. The word rendered "roasteth" occurs nowhere else ; but the interpretation of the A.V. is widely adopted. Others render the first clause thus : "The slothful man will not *secure* (keep in his net) what he takes in hunting," i.e. will let whatever he gains slip from his hands through want of effort and attention.

CHAP. 13. A WISE son heareth his father's instruction:

- ¶ But a scorner heareth not rebuke. ^a 1 Sam. 2. 25.
- 2 ^b A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth:
But the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. ^b ch. 12. 14.
- 3 ^c He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life:
But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. ^c Ps. 39. 1. ch. 21. 23. Jam. 3. 2.
- 4 ^d The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing:
But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. ^d ch. 10. 4.
- 5 A righteous man hateth lying:
But a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.
- 6 ^e Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way:
But wickedness overthroweth ¹ the sinner. ^e ch. 11. 3, 5, 6.
- 7 ^f There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing:
There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. ^f ch. 12. 9.
- 8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches:
But the poor heareth not rebuke.
- 9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth:
^g But the ² lamp of the wicked shall be put out. ^g Job 18. 5, 6. & 21. 17. ch. 24. 20.
- 10 Only by pride cometh contention:
But with the well advised is wisdom.
- 11 ^h Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished:
But he that gathereth ³ by labour shall increase. ^h ch. 10. 2. & 20. 21.
- 12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick:
But ⁴ when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life. ⁴ ver. 19.
- 13 Whoso ^k despiseth the word shall be destroyed:
But he that feareth the commandment ⁴ shall be rewarded. ^k 2Chr. 36. 16.

¹ Heb. sin.
² Or, candle.

³ Heb. with the hand.
⁴ Or, shall be in peace.

XIII. 1. *heareth*] The verb of the second clause is inserted in the first, just as in the next verse that of the first is inserted in the second. Stress is laid on the obstinacy of the scorner refusing to hear, not "instruction" only, but the much stronger "rebuke."

2. *the fruit of his mouth*] Speech rightly used is itself good, and must therefore bring good fruit.

eat violence] i.e. Bring upon itself repayment in kind for its deeds of evil.

7. Cp. xi. 24. There is a seeming wealth behind which there lies a deep spiritual poverty and wretchedness. There is a poverty which makes a man rich for the kingdom of God.

8. On the one side is the seeming advantage of wealth. The rich man gets out of many troubles, escapes often from a just retribution, by his money. But then the poor man in his turn is free from the risk of the threats and litigation that beset the rich. He "hears no rebuke" (the words are not used as in v. 1) just as the dead "hear not the voice of the op-

pressor" (Job iii. 18) or the abuse of the envious.

9. Very beautiful in its poetry is the idea of the light "rejoicing" in its brightness (cp. Ps. xix. 5; Job xxxviii. 7). Note also the distinction between the "light" and the "lamp." The righteous have the true light in them. That which belongs to the wicked is but derived and temporary, and shall be extinguished before long. Cp. a like distinction in John i. 8, v. 35.

10. Either (1) "By pride alone comes contention"—that is the one unfailing spring of quarrels; or (2) "By pride comes contention only"—it, and it alone, is the fruit of pride.

11. *by vanity*] Lit. "by a breath," i.e. by a windfall, or sudden stroke of fortune, not by honest labour. The general meaning seems to be that the mere possession of riches is as nothing; they come and go, but the power to gain by skill of hand ("labour") is everything.

12. *when the desire cometh*] The desire comes, it is a tree of life: i.e. the object of our desires is attained. Cp. iii. 18.

- ¹ ch. 10. 11. 14 ¹The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life,
^{14. 27.} To depart from ^m the snares of death.
^{16. 22.} 15 Good understanding giveth favour:
^{2 Sam. 22. 6.} But the way of transgressors *is* hard.
^{ch. 12. 23.} 16 ⁿEvery prudent *man* dealeth with knowledge:
^{15. 2.} But a fool ¹layeth open *his* folly.
^{ch. 25. 13.} 17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief:
But ^o ²a faithful ambassador *is* health.
^{ch. 15. 5.} 18 Poverty and shame *shall be to him* that refuseth instruction:
^{31.} But ^phe that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.
^{4 ver. 12.} 19 ^qThe desire accomplished is sweet to the soul:
But *it is* abomination to fools to depart from evil.
20 He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise:
But a companion of fools ³shall be destroyed.
^{Ps. 32. 10.} 21 ^rEvil pursueth sinners:
But to the righteous good shall be repayed.
22 A good *man* leaveth an inheritance to his children's children:
And ^sthe wealth of the sinner *is* laid up for the just.
^{Job 27. 16, 17.} 23 ^tMuch food *is in* the tillage of the poor:
^{ch. 28. 8.} But there is *that is* destroyed for want of judgment.
^{Ecc. 2. 26.} 24 ^uHe that spareth his rod hateth his son:
^{ch. 12. 11.} But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.
^{ch. 19. 18.} 25 ^vThe righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul:
^{22. 15.} But the belly of the wicked shall want.
^{23. 13.} **CHAP. 14. EVERY ^awise woman ^bbuildeth her house:**
^{29. 15, 17.} But the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.
^{Ps. 34. 10.} 2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD:
^{37. 3.} ^cBut *he that is* perverse in his ways despiseth him.
^{ch. 24. 3.} 3 In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of pride:
^{Ruth 4. 11.} ^dBut the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
^{Job 12. 4.} 4 Where no oxen *are*, the crib *is* clean:
^{ch. 12. 6.} But much increase *is by* the strength of the ox.

¹ Heb. *spreudeth*.² Heb. *an ambassador of faithfulness*.³ Heb. *shall be broken*.

15. *hard*] The primary meaning of the original word is permanence (cp. Deut. xxi. 4; Mic. vi. 2). This may be applied as here to the hard dry rock, to running streams, or to stagnant pools. In either case, the idea is that of the barren dry soil, or the impassable marsh, in contrast with the fountain of life, carrying joy and refreshment with it.

19. The connexion is somewhat obscure. Either, "Satisfied desire is pleasant, therefore it is an abomination to fools to depart from the evil on which their minds are set;" or, "Sweet is the satisfaction of desire, yet the wicked will not depart from the evil which makes that satisfaction impossible."

22. An expression of trust, that in the long run the anomalies of the world are rendered even (cp. marg. ref.). The heaped-

up treasures of the wicked find their way at last into the hands of better men.

23. The contrast is the ever-recurring one between honest poverty and dishonest wealth. "The new-ploughed field of the poor is much food, but there are those, who, though rich, perish through their disregard of right."

XIV. 1. *Every wise woman*] Lit. **Wise women**. The fullest recognition that has as yet met us of the importance of woman, for good or evil, in all human society.

3. *a rod of pride*] i.e. The pride shown in his speech is as a rod with which he strikes down others and himself.

4. i.e. Labour has its rough, unpleasant side, yet it ends in profit. So also, the life of contemplation may seem purer, "cleaner" than that of action. The outer

- 5 ^a A faithful witness will not lie:
But a false witness will utter lies. ^e Ex. 20. 16.
& 23. 1.
ch. 6. 19.
& 12. 17.
ver. 25.
^f ch. 8. 9.
& 17. 24.
- 6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and *findeth it not*:
But ^g knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.
- 7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,
When thou perceivest not *in him* the lips of knowledge.
- 8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way:
But the folly of fools *is* deceit.
- 9 ^h Fools make a mock at sin:
But among the righteous *there is* favour. ^g ch. 10. 23.
- 10 The heart knoweth ⁱ his own bitterness;
And a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.
- 11 ^h The house of the wicked shall be overthrown:
But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. ^h Job 8. 15.
- 12 ⁱ There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,
But ^k the end thereof *are* the ways of death. ⁱ ch. 16. 25.
^k Rom. 6. 21.
- 13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful;
And ^l the end of that mirth *is* heaviness. ^l ch. 5. 4.
Eccl. 2. 2.
^m ch. 1. 31.
& 12. 14.
- 14 The backslider in heart shall be ^m filled with his own ways:
And a good man *shall be satisfied* from himself.
- 15 The simple believeth every word:
But the prudent *man* looketh well to his going.
- 16 ⁿ A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil:
But the fool rageth, and is confident. ⁿ ch. 22. 3.
- 17 *He that is soon angry* dealeth foolishly:
And a man of wicked devices is hated.

ⁱ Heb. the bitterness of his soul.

business of the world brings its cares and disturbances, but also "much increase." There will be a sure reward of that activity in good works for him who goes, as with "the strength of the ox," to the task to which God calls him.

6. *findeth it not*] Lit. there is none. The successful pursuit of wisdom presupposes at least earnestness and reverence. The scoffer shuts himself out from the capacity of recognizing truth.

8. The Hebrew counterpart to the Greek "Know thyself." "The highest wisdom is for a man to understand his own way. The extremest folly is self-deceit." The word "deceit" may, however, involve fraud practised upon others. The folly of fools shows itself then in their ceaseless effort to deceive.

9. *Fools make a mock*] The verb in the Heb. is singular, the noun plural. The A.V. assumes that the number is altered to individualize the application of the maxim. Others translate, "Sin mocks the fools who are its victims," i.e. disappoints and ruins them; or, "A sin-offering does but mock the worshippers when they are wilfully

wicked:" they expect to gain God's favour, and do not gain it. So taken it becomes parallel to xv. 8, xxi. 7.

10. A striking expression of the ultimate solitude of each man's soul at all times, and not merely at the hour of death. Something there is in every sorrow, and in every joy, which no one else can share. Beyond that range it is well to remember that there is a Divine Sympathy, uniting perfect knowledge and perfect love.

12. *a way &c.*] The way of the fool, the way of self-indulgence and self-will.

13. Sorrow of some kind either mingles itself with outward joy, or follows hard upon it.

14. *shall be satisfied*] These words are not in the original. Repeat the verb from the first clause, "He who falls away from God in his heart, shall be filled with his own ways; and the good man (shall be filled) with that which belongs to him."

15. *simple*] In the bad sense (cp. i. 22).

17. The contrast lies between two forms of evil. Hasty anger acts foolishly, but the "man of wicked devices," vindictive and insidious, incurs all men's hatred.

- 18 The simple inherit folly :
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- 19 The evil bow before the good ;
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- ° ch. 19. 7. 20 °The poor is hated even of his own neighbour :
But ¹the rich *hath* many friends.
- 21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth :
° But he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.
- ° Ps. 41. 1.
& 112. 9. 22 Do they not err that devise evil ?
But mercy and truth *shall be* to them that devise good.
- 23 In all labour there is profit :
But the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury.
- 24 The crown of the wise *is* their riches :
But the foolishness of fools *is* folly.
- ° ver. 5. 25 °A true witness delivereth souls :
But a deceitful witness speaketh lies.
- 26 In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence :
And his children shall have a place of refuge.
- ° ch. 13. 14. 27 °The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life,
To depart from the snares of death.
- 28 In the multitude of people *is* the king's honour :
But in the want of people *is* the destruction of the prince.
- ° ch. 10. 32.
Jam. 1. 19. 29 °He that *is* slow to wrath *is* of great understanding :
But he that *is* °hasty of spirit exalteth folly.
- 30 A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh :
° But °envy °the rottenness of the bones.
- ° Ps. 112. 10.
° ch. 12. 4.

¹ Heb. many are the lovers of the rich.² Heb. short of spirit.

18. *crowned*] The teacher anticipates the truth, and the paradox, of the Stoic saying, "The wise is the only king."

20. The maxim, jarring as it is, represents the generalization of a wide experience; but the words which follow (v. 21) show that it is not to be taken by itself. In spite of all the selfish morality of mere prudence, the hearer is warned that to despise his "neighbour" (Christians must take the word in all the width given to it by the parable of the Good Samaritan) is to sin. The fulness of blessing comes on him who sees in the poor the objects of his mercy.

22. *err*] In the sense of wandering from the right way, the way of life.

23. The contrast between a single, thorough deed, and the mere emptiness of speech.

24. "The crown," *i.e.* the glory of the wise man constitutes his wealth. He alone is truly rich even as he alone (cp. v. 18 note) is truly king.

The seeming tautology of the second clause is really its point. Turn "the foolishness of fools" as you will, it comes back to "foolishness" at last.

25. In the second clause, "destroyeth life" might have been expected as the antithesis to "delivereth souls." But what worse could be said? "A deceitful witness speaketh lies." All destruction is implied in falsehood.

26. *his children*] Probably, the children whom the LORD adopts, and who are true to their adoption.

27. See marg. ref. and x. 11 note.

28. A protest against the false ideal of national greatness to which Eastern kings, for the most part, have bowed down. Not conquest, or pomp, or gorgeous array, but a happy and numerous people form the true glory of a king. The word translated "prince" is of doubtful meaning; but the translation is supported by the LXX., Vulg., and most commentators.

29. *exalteth folly*] Lifts it up, as it were, on high, and exposes it to the gaze of all men.

30. *sound heart*] Lit. "heart of health," that in which all emotions and appetites are in a healthy equilibrium. The contrast with this is the envy which eats, like a consuming disease, into the very bones and marrow of a man's moral life.

- 31 ^aHe that oppresseth the poor reproacheth ^vhis Maker :
 But he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.
- 32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness :
 But ^athe righteous hath hope in his death.
- 33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding :
 But ^athat which is in the midst of fools is made known.
- 34 Righteousness exalteth a nation :
 But sin is a reproach ¹to any people.
- 35 ^bThe king's favour is toward a wise servant :
 But his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

- CHAP. 15.** A ^aSOFT answer turneth away wrath :
 But ^bgrievous words stir up anger.
- 2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright :
 But the mouth of fools ²poureth out foolishness.
- 3 ^dThe eyes of the LORD are in every place,
 Beholding the evil and the good.
- 4 ³A wholesome tongue is a tree of life :
 But perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.
- 5 ^eA fool despiseth his father's instruction :
 But he that regardeth reproof is prudent.
- 6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure :
 But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.
- 7 The lips ³of the wise disperse knowledge :
 But the heart of the foolish doeth not so.
- 8 ^eThe sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD :
 But the prayer of the upright is his delight.
- 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD :
 But he loveth him that ^bfolloweth after righteousness.

¹ Heb. to nations.

² Heb. belcheth, or, bubbleth.

³ Heb. The healing of the tongue.

^a ch. 17. 5.
 Matt. 25. 40,
 45.
^v See Job
 31. 15, 16.
 ch. 22. 2.
^a Job 13. 15.
 & 19. 26.
 Ps. 23. 4.
 & 37. 37.
 2 Cor. 1. 9.
 & 5. 8.
 2 Tim. 4. 18.
^c ch. 12. 16.
 & 29. 11.
^b Matt. 24.
 45, 47.
^a Judg. 8. 1,
 2, 3.
 ch. 25. 15.
^b 1 Sam. 25.
 10, &c.
 1 K. 12.
 13, 14, 16.
^c ver. 28.
 ch. 12. 23.
 & 13. 16.
^d Job 34. 21.
 ch. 5. 21.
 Jer. 18. 17.
 & 32. 19.
 Heb. 4. 13.
^e ch. 10. 1.
^f ch. 13. 18.
 ver. 31. 32.

^e ch. 21. 27.
 Isai. 1. 11.
 & 61. 8.
 & 66. 3.
 Jer. 6. 20.
 Amos 5. 22.
^a ch. 21. 21.
 1 Tim. 6. 11.

31. honoureth him] *i.e.* God, Who is the Maker of poor and rich alike.

32. Consult marg. *reff.* The hope which abides even "in death" must look beyond it.

33. Omit "that which is." "Wisdom" is the subject of both clauses. She is "made known," *i.e.* by the very force of contrast, in the midst of fools; or she is reserved and reticent in the one, noisy and boastful in the other. The LXX. and some other Versions get over the difficulty by reading "Wisdom is not made known."

34. *reproach*] The word so rendered has this sense in the Targum of Lev. xx. 17. Its more usual meaning is "mercy," "piety;" hence some have attached to the word rendered "sin" the sense of "sin-offering," and so get the maxim "piety is an atonement for the people."

XV. 2. *useth knowledge aright*] Rather, makes knowledge goodly. The power of well-considered speech to commend true

wisdom, is contrasted with the pouring (*lit.* as in marg.) forth of folly.

3. The teaching which began with the fear of the Lord (i. 7) would not be complete without this assertion of His omnipresent knowledge.

4. *A wholesome tongue*] *Lit.* as in marg., the same word as "sound" in xiv. 30 (see note). A more literal rendering would be *soundness of speech*.

tree of life] Cp. iii. 18 note.
breach in the spirit] With the sense of vexation (cp. Isai. lxx. 14).

7. *not so*] The word translated "so" is taken by some in its etymological force as "strong," "firm," and the passage is rendered "the heart of the fool disperseth (supplied from the first clause) what is weak and unsteady," *i.e.* "falsehood and un wisdom." The LXX. takes it as an adjective, "the heart of the fool is unsteady." The phrase as it stands in the A.V. is, however, of frequent occurrence (Gen. xlviii. 18; Exod. x. 11; Num. xii. 7).

- ¹ 1 K. 22. 8. 10 ¹Correction is ¹grievous unto him that forsaketh the way :
² ch. 5. 12. And ²he that hateth reproof shall die.
 & 10. 17.
- ¹ Job 26. 6. 11 ¹Hell and destruction *are* before the LORD :
 Ps. 139. 8. How much more then ²the hearts of the children of men ?
² 2 Chr. 6. 30.
- Ps. 7. 9. 12 ²A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him :
 John 2. 24. Neither will he go unto the wise.
 Acts 1. 24.
- ² Amos 5. 10. 13 ²A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance :
 2 Tim. 4. 3. But ²by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.
 c ch. 17. 22.
- ² ch. 12. 25. 14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh ¹knowledge :
 But the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.
- 15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil :
 c ch. 17. 22. ²But he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.
- c Ps. 37. 16. 16 ²Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD
 ch. 16. 8. Than great treasure and trouble therewith.
 1 Tim. 6. 6.
- c ch. 17. 1. 17 ²Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is,
 Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.
- c ch. 26. 21. 18 ²A wrathful man stirreth up strife :
 & 29. 22. But *he that is* slow to anger appeaseth strife.
- c ch. 22. 5. 19 ²The way of the slothful *man is* as an hedge of thorns :
 But the way of the righteous ²*is* made plain.
- c ch. 10. 1. 20 ²A wise son maketh a glad father :
 & 29. 3. But a foolish man despiseth his mother.
- c ch. 10. 23. 21 ²Folly *is* joy to *him that is* ³destitute of wisdom :
 c Eph. 5. 15. ²But a man of understanding walketh uprightly.
- c ch. 11. 14. 22 ²Without counsel purposes are disappointed :
 & 20. 18. But in the multitude of counsellors they are established.
- c ch. 25. 11. 23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth :
 And ²a word *spoken* ⁴in due season, how good *is it* !
- ¹ Or, *Instruction*. ² Heb. *is raised up as a* ³ Heb. *void of heart*.
⁴ Heb. *in his season*.

10. Better, **There is a grievous correction**, *i.e.* nothing less than death, to him that forsaketh the way.

13. Some prefer to render the last clause, "In sorrow of heart the breath is oppressed."

15. *afflicted*] The affliction meant here is less that of outward circumstances than of a troubled and downcast spirit. Life to the cheerful is as one perpetual banquet, whether he be poor or rich. That which disturbs the feast is anxiety, the "taking (anxious) thought" of Matt. vi. 34.

16. This proverb has its completion in the teaching of Matt. vi. 33.

17. *a dinner of herbs*] The meals of the poor and the abstemious. The "stalled ox," like the "fatted calf" of Luke xv. 23, would indicate a stately magnificence.

19. The slothful goes on his journey, and for him the path is thick set with thorns, briars, fences, through which he cannot force his way. For the "righteous" (better, up-

right), the same path is as the broad raised causeway of the king's highway. Cp. Isai. xl. 3.

20. To "despise" a mother is to cause her the deepest grief, and is therefore not unfitly contrasted with "making a glad father."

21 *i.e.* The empty-hearted, rejoicing in folly, goes the wrong way; the man of understanding, rejoicing in wisdom, goes the right way.

22. *counsellors*] The Hebrew word, used almost as an official title (1 Chr. xxvii. 32; Isai. i. 26, xix. 11), brings before us the picture of the council-chamber of Eastern countries, arranged for a solemn conference of the wise.

23. Probably, a special reference to debates in council (*v. 23*). They bring before us the special characteristic of the East, the delight in ready, improvised answers, solving difficulties, turning aside anger. Cp. the effect on the scribe (Mark xii. 28).

- 24 ^cThe way of life ^{is} above to the wise,
That he may depart from hell beneath.
- 25 ^dThe LORD will destroy the house of the proud :
But ^ehe will establish the border of the widow.
- 26 ^fThe thoughts of the wicked ^{are} an abomination to the LORD :
^gBut ^hthe words of the pure ^{are} ⁱpleasant words.
- 27 ^kHe that is greedy ^jof gain troubleth his own house ;
But he that hateth gifts shall live.
- 28 The heart of the righteous ⁱstudieth to answer :
But the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.
- 29 ^kThe LORD ^{is} far from the wicked :
But ^lhe heareth the prayer of the righteous.
- 30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart :
And a good report maketh the bones fat.
- 31 ^mThe ear that heareth the reproof of life
Abideth among the wise.
- 32 He that refuseth ⁿinstruction despiseth his own soul :
But he that ^oheareth reproof ^pgetteth understanding.
- 33 ^qThe fear of the LORD ^{is} the instruction of wisdom ;
And ^rbefore honour ^{is} humility.
- CHAP. 16.** THE ^apreparations of the heart in man,
^bAnd the answer of the tongue, ^{is} from the LORD.
- 2 ^cAll the ways of a man ^{are} clean in his own eyes ;
But ^dthe LORD weigheth the spirits.

^c Phil. 3. 20.
Col. 3. 1, 2.

^d ch. 12. 7.
& 14. 11.

^e Ps. 146. 8.
^f ch. 6. 16,
18.

^g Ps. 37. 30.
^h ch. 11. 19.

Isai. 5. 8.
Jer. 17. 11.
ⁱ 1 Pet. 3. 15.

^k Ps. 10. 1.

^l & 34. 16.
^m Ps. 145. 18,
19.

ⁿ ver. 5.

^o ch. 1. 7.

^p ch. 18. 12.

^q ch. 19. 21.

& 20. 24.

Jer. 10. 23.

^r Matt. 10.

19, 20.

^s ch. 21. 2.

^t 1 Sam. 16. 7.

¹ Heb. words of pleasant-
ness.

² Or, correction.
³ Or, obeyeth.

⁴ Heb. possesseth an heart.
⁵ Or, disposing.

24. *above...beneath*] The one path is all along upward, leading to the highest life. It rescues the "wise" from the other, which is all along downward, ending in the gloom of Sheol.

25. *the widow*] Here, as elsewhere (Deut. x. 18 ; Ps. lxxviii. 5), the widow, as the extremest type of desolation, stands as the representative of a class safer in their poverty under the protection of the Lord, than the proud in the haughtiness of their strength.

26. Some prefer the marg., and render, **words of pleasantness are pure.** Gracious words are to God as a pure acceptable offering, the similitude being taken from the Levitical ritual, and the word "pure" in a half ceremonial sense (cp. Mal. i. 11).

27. *gifts*] There is a special application to the office of the judge. The Chaldee Targum paraphrases the first words of this passage, "he who gathers the mammon of unrighteousness," using the words with special reference to wealth obtained by unjust judgments. May we infer that Christ's adoption of that phrase (Luke xv. 9) had a point of contact with this proverb, through the Version then popularly used in the synagogues of Palestine?

28. Contrast the "studying" of the wise

before he answers and the hasty babbling of the foolish. The teaching of our Lord (Matt. x. 19) presents us with a different and higher precept, resting upon different conditions.

29. Cp. John ix. 31.

30. *the light of the eyes*] The brightness which shines in the eyes of one whose heart and face are alike full of joy. Such a look acts with a healing and quickening power. Cp. xvi. 15.

a good report] i.e. Good news.

31. *the reproof of life*] i.e. The reproof that leads to, or gives life, rather than that which comes from life and its experience.

33. *the instruction of wisdom*] i.e. The discipline that leads to wisdom.

XVI. The proverbs in vv. 1-7 have, more than any other group, a specially religious character impressed on them. The name of Jehovah as Giver, Guide, Ruler, or Judge, meets us in each of them.

1. Better, **The plans of the heart belong to man, but the utterance of the tongue is from Jehovah.** Thoughts come and go, as it were, spontaneously ; but true, well-ordered speech is the gift of God. Cp. v. 9.

2. We are blind to our own faults, do not see ourselves as others see us. There is One Who tries not the "ways" only, but the

- Ps. 37. 5.
 & 55. 22.
 Matt. 6. 25.
 Luke 12. 22.
 Phil. 4. 6.
 1 Pet. 5. 7.
 J' Isai. 43. 7.
 Rom. 11. 36.
 J' Job 21. 30.
 Rom. 9. 22.
 & ch. 6. 17.
 & 8. 13.
 † ch. 11. 21.
 † Dan. 4. 27.
 Luke 11. 41.
 † ch. 14. 16.
- 3 ^e Commit thy works unto the LORD,
 And thy thoughts shall be established.
- 4 ^f The LORD hath made all *things* for himself:
^g Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
- 5 ^h Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomination to the
 LORD:
Though hand *join* in hand, he shall not be ²unpunished.
- 6 ^k By mercy and truth iniquity is purged:
 And ^l by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.
- 7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
 He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.
- 8 ^m Better *is* a little with righteousness
 Than great revenues without right.
- 9 ⁿ A man's heart deviseth his way:
^o But the LORD directeth his steps.
- 10 ^a A divine sentence *is* in the lips of the king:
 His mouth transgresseth not in judgment.
- 11 ^p A just weight and balance *are* the LORD's:
^q All the weights of the bag *are* his work.
- 12 *It is* an abomination to kings to commit wickedness:
 For ^r the throne is established by righteousness.
- 13 ^s Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings;
 And they love him that speaketh right.
- 14 ^t The wrath of a king *is* as messengers of death:
 But a wise man will pacify it.
- 15 In the light of the king's countenance *is* life;
 And ^u his favour *is* "as a cloud of the latter rain."
- 16 ^v How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold!
 And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

¹ Heb. *Roll*.² Heb. *held innocent*.³ Heb. *Divination*.⁴ Heb. *All the stones*.

"spirits" (Heb. iv. 12): this is the true remedy against self-deceit.

3. *Commit*] Lit. as in marg., as a man transfers a burden from his own back to one stronger and better able to bear it. Cp. marg. *ref.*

thy thoughts] i.e. The plans or counsels out of which the works spring.

4. *for himself*] Better, The Lord hath wrought everything for its own end; and this includes the appointment of an "evil day" for "the wicked" who deserve it.

5. See marg. *ref. note*.

6. Cp. xv. 8. "By mercy and truth," not by sacrifices and burnt-offerings, "iniquity is purged, atoned for, expiated." The teaching is the same as that of the Prophets.

7. Goodness has power to charm and win even enemies to itself.

9. *deviseth his way*] i.e. Thinks it out with anxious care; yet it is the Lord and He only Who directs the steps. Cp. v. 1.

10. *A divine sentence*] See marg., i.e. "soothsaying" in its darker aspect as contrasted with prophecy. The true oracle is to be sought, not from soothsayers and diviners, but "at the lips of the king," who is ideally the representative, the *προφήτης* of Jehovah, in His government of mankind.

11. See xi. 1 note. Men are not to think that trade lies outside the Divine Law. God has commanded there also all that belongs to truth and right.

14. While v. 13 depicts the king as he ought to be, this verse reminds us of the terrible rapidity with which, in the despotic monarchies of the East, punishment, even death, follows royal displeasure.

15. The "latter rain" is that which falls in March or April just before the harvest. The "cloud" which brings it, at once screening men from the scorching sun, and bringing plenty and blessing, is a fit type of the highest favour.

- 17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil :
He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.
- 18 ¹Pride *goeth* before destruction,
And an haughty spirit before a fall. * ch. 11. 2.
* 17. 19.
* 18. 12.
- 19 Better *it is* to be of an humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- 20 ¹He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good :
And whoso ²trusteth in the LORD, happy *is* he. * Ps. 2. 12.
* 34. 8.
* 125. 1.
Isai. 30. 18.
Jer. 17. 7.
* ch. 13. 14.
* 14. 27.
- 21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent :
And the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.
- 22 ³Understanding *is* a wellspring of life unto him that hath it :
But the instruction of fools *is* folly.
- 23 ⁴The heart of the wise ⁵teacheth his mouth,
And addeth learning to his lips. * Ps. 37. 30.
Matt. 12. 34.
- 24 Pleasant words *are as* an honeycomb,
Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.
- 25 ⁶There is a way that seemeth right unto a man,
But the end thereof *are* the ways of death. * ch. 14. 12.
- 26 ⁷He that laboureth laboureth for himself ;
For his mouth ⁸craveth it of him. * See ch. 9.
12.
Eccl. 6. 7.
- 27 ⁹An ungodly man diggeth up evil :
And in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.
- 28 ¹⁰A froward man ¹¹soweth strife :
And ¹²a whisperer separateth chief friends. * ch. 6. 14,
19.
* 15. 18.
* 26. 21.
* 29. 22.
* ch. 17. 9.
* ch. 1. 10,
* c.
- 29 A violent man ¹³enticeth his neighbour,
And leadeth him into the way *that is* not good.
- 30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things :
Moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.
- 31 ¹⁴The hoary head *is* a crown of glory,
If it be found in the way of righteousness. * ch. 20. 29.

¹ Or, *He that understandeth a matter.*

³ Heb. *The soul of him that laboureth.*

⁴ Heb. *soweth unto him.*

⁵ Heb. *A man of Belial.*

⁶ Heb. *sendeth forth.*

20. Good as it is to "handle a matter wisely," it is far better to "trust in the Lord." The former is really impossible except through the latter.

21. The words point to the conditions of all true growth in wisdom; and he who has the gift of uttering it in winning speech increases it in himself and others.

22. *wellspring of life* [Cp. x. 11 note. *the instruction of fools*] Not that which they give, but that which they receive. Cp. xiv. 24. "Folly" is its own all-sufficient punishment.

24. Honey took its place not only among the luxuries, but among the medicines of the Israelites. This two-fold use made it all the fitter to be an emblem both of the true Wisdom which is also true obedience, and of the "pleasant words" in which that Wisdom speaks.

26. *He that laboureth* [Lit., as in the marg., i.e. "The desire of the labourer labours VOL. III.

for him" (or, helps him in his work), "for his mouth urges him on." Hunger of some kind is the spring of all hearty labour. Without that the man would sit down and take his ease. So also, unless there is a hunger in the soul, craving to be fed, there can be no true labour after righteousness and wisdom (cp. Matt. v. 6).

27-30. The four verses speak of the same thing, and the well-known opprobrious name, the "man of Belial," stands at the head as stigmatizing the man who delights in causing the mischief of which they treat. *diggeth up evil* [i.e. Digs an evil pit for others to fall into. Cp. Ps. vii. 15.

30. The physiognomy of the man of Belial, the half-closed eyes that never look you straight in the face, the restlessness or cunning of which biting the lips is the surest indication. Cp. vi. 13.

31. Omit "if." Lit. "it (i.e. the hoary head) is found in the way of righteous-

- ^a ch. 19. 11. 32 *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ;*
And he that ruleth his spirit than he that ~~take~~th a city.
- 33 The lot is cast into the lap ;
But the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.
- ^a ch. 15. 17. **CHAP. 17. BETTER** *is* ^a a dry morsel, and quietness therewith,
Than an house full of ¹ sacrifices *with* strife.
- ^b ch. 10. 5. 2 A wise servant shall have rule over ^b a son that causeth shame,
& 19. 26. And shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.
- ^c Ps. 26. 2. 3 *The* fining pot *is* for silver, and the furnace for gold :
ch. 27. 21. But the LORD trieth the hearts.
Jer. 17. 10.
- 4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips ;
And a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.
- ^d ch. 14. 31. 5 ^d Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker,
^e Obad. 12. And ^e he that is glad at calamities shall not be ² unpunished.
- ^f Ps. 127. 3. 6 *Children's children are* the crown of old men ;
& 128. 3. And the glory of children *are* their fathers.
- 7 ³ Excellent speech becometh not a fool :
Much less do ⁴ lying lips a prince.
- ^g ch. 18. 16. 8 *A gift is as* ⁵ a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it :
& 19. 6. Whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.
- ^h ch. 10. 12. 9 ^h He that covereth a transgression ⁶ seeketh love ;
ⁱ ch. 16. 23. But ⁱ he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.

¹ Or, good cheer.² Heb. held innocent.³ Heb. A lip of excellency.⁴ Heb. A lip of lying.⁵ Heb. a stone of grace.⁶ Or, procureth.

ness," comes as the reward of righteousness.

33. *disposing*] Better, the judgment or sentence which depends upon the lot. The lots were thrown into the gathered folds of a robe, and then drawn out. Where everything seemed the merest chance, there the faithful Israelite teacher recognized the guidance of a higher Will. Cp. the case of Achan (Josh. vii. 18), and of Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv. 37-42). The process here described would seem to have been employed ordinarily in trials where the judges could not decide on the facts before them (cp. xviii. 18).

XVII. 1. *sacrifices*] The feast accompanied the offerings (vii. 14). Part of the victims were burnt upon the Altar, the rest was consumed by the worshipper and his friends. The "house full of sacrifices" was therefore one abounding in sumptuous feasts.

2. The "servant," it must be remembered, was a slave, but (as in such cases as Gen. xv. 2 ; 2 Sam. xvi. 4) might succeed to the inheritance.

3. Wonderful as is the separation of the pure metal from the dross with which it has mingled, there is something yet more wonderful in the Divine discipline which purifies the good that lies hid, like a grain of gold, even in rough and common natures, and frees it from all admixture of evil. Cp. Mal. iii. 2 ; 1 Pet. i. 7.

4. The two clauses describe two phases of the mutual affinities of evil. The evil-doer delights in lies, the liar in bad words.

5. *he that is glad at calamities*] A temper common at all times as the most hateful form of evil ; the Greek ἐμψαρκασία. The sins spoken of in both clauses occur also in Job's vindication of his integrity (xxxi. 13, 29).

6. The reciprocity of good in sustained family relationships. A long line of children's children is the glory of old age, a long line of ancestors the glory of their descendants.

7. The marg. renderings are more literal and give greater emphasis. What is pointed out is not the unfitness of lying lips for the princely-hearted, but the necessity of harmony, in each case, between character and speech.

8. A half-satirical description of the power of bribery in palaces and among judges. The precious stone (lit. as in marg.) is probably a gem, thought of as a talisman, which, "wherever it turns," will ensure "prosperity" to him who, being the possessor, has the power to give it.

9. *seeketh love*] i.e. Takes the course which leads to his gaining it.

he that repeateth a matter] The warning is directed against that which leads a man to dwell with irritating iteration on a past offence instead of burying it in oblivion.

- 10 ¹A reproof entereth more into a wise man
Than an hundred stripes into a fool.
- 11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion :
Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.
- 12 Let ^a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man,
Rather than a fool in his folly.
- 13 Whoso ¹rewardeth evil for good,
Evil shall not depart from his house.
- 14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water :
Therefore ^mleave off contention, before it be meddled with.
- 15 ²He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the
just,
Even they both are abomination to the LORD.
- 16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool
To get wisdom, ^oseeing he hath no heart to it ?
- 17 ^pA friend loveth at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.
- 18 ^qA man void of ²understanding striketh hands,
And becometh surety in the presence of his friend.
- 19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife :
And ^rhe that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.
- 20 ³He that hath a froward heart findeth no good :
And he that hath ^a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.
- 21 ⁴He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow :
And the father of a fool hath no joy.
- 22 ^uA merry heart doeth good ⁴like a medicine :
^vBut a broken spirit drieth the bones.

^k Hos. 13. 8.

¹ Ps. 100. 4.
Jer. 18. 20.
See Rom.
12. 17.

¹ Thess. 5. 15.
¹ Pet. 3. 9.
^m ch. 20. 3.

¹ Thess. 4.
11.
ⁿ Ex. 23. 7.

ch. 24. 24.
Isai. 5. 23.

^o ch. 21. 25,
26.

^p Ruth 1. 10.
ch. 18. 24.

^q ch. 6. 1.
& 11. 15.

^r ch. 16. 18.

^s Jam. 3. 8.

^t ch. 10. 1.
& 19. 13.
ver. 25.

^u ch. 12. 25.
& 15. 13, 15.

^v Ps. 22. 15.

¹ Or, *A reproof aweth more
a wise man, than to strike
a fool an hundred times.*

² Heb. *heart.*
³ Heb. *The froward of*

heart.
⁴ Or, *to a medicine.*

separateth very friends] Better, *alienateth his chief friend.* The tale-bearer works injury to himself.

11. The proverb expresses the reverence of the East for the supreme authority of the king. The "cruel messenger" is probably the king's officer despatched to subdue and punish. The LXX. renders "The Lord will send a pitiless Angel."

12. The large brown bear of Syria, in her rage at the loss of her whelps, was to the Israelites the strongest type of brute ferocity. Cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 8 ; 2 K. ii. 24.

14. The figure is taken from the great tank or reservoir upon which Eastern cities often depended for their supply of water. The beginning of strife is compared to the first crack in the mound of such a reservoir. At first a few drops ooze out, but after a time the whole mass of waters pour themselves forth with fury, and it is hard to set limits to the destruction which they cause. *before it be meddled with*] Lit. "before it rolls, or rushes forward."

15. Men need to be warned against an unjust acquittal, no less than against unjust

condemnation. The word "justifieth" has its forensic sense, "to declare righteous," to acquit.

16. More literally : **Why is there a price in the hand of a fool ? Is it to get wisdom when he has no heart for it ?** No money will avail without the understanding heart.

17. Some take the proverb to describe (as in xviii. 24) the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother : " and render : **At all times a friend loveth, but in adversity he is born (i.e. becomes) a brother.**

18. Cp. marg. reff. As nothing is nobler than the self-sacrifice of the true friend (v. 17), so nothing is more contemptible than the weakness which allows itself to be sacrificed for the sake of worthless associates.

in the presence of his friend] i.e. "On behalf of " or "to his friend for some third person."

19. *he that exalteth his gate*] i.e. Builds a stately house, indulges in arrogant ostentation.

22. *doeth good like a medicine*] Better, **worketh a good healing.** Omit "like."

- v Ex. 23. 8. 23 A wicked *man* taketh a gift out of the bosom
 v To pervert the ways of judgment.
 * ch. 14. 6. 24 *Wisdom *is* before him that hath understanding ;
 Eccl. 2. 14. But the eyes of a fool *are* in the ends of the earth.
 & 8. 1.
 * ch. 10. 1. 25 *A foolish son *is* a grief to his father,
 & 15. 20. And bitterness to her that bare him.
 & 19. 13.
 b ver. 15. 26 Also ^bto punish the just *is* not good,
 ch. 18. 5. Nor to strike princes for equity.
 c Jam. 1. 19. 27 cHe that hath knowledge spareth his words :
 And a man of understanding is of ¹an excellent spirit.
 d Job 13. 5. 28 dEven a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise :
 And he that shutteth his lips *is* esteemed a man of under-
 standing.

CHAP. 18. THROUGH ²desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh

And intermeddleth with all wisdom.

2 A fool hath no delight in understanding,
 But that his heart may discover itself.

3 When the wicked cometh, *then* cometh also contempt,
 And with ignominy reproach.

- * ch. 10. 11. 4 *The words of a man's mouth *are* as deep waters,
 b Ps. 78. 2. b And the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

¹ Or, a cool spirit.

² Or, He that separateth

himself seeketh according
 to his desire, and inter-

meddleth ⁱⁿ every busi-
 ness : See Jude 19.

23. The words "out of the bosom," from the fold of the garment, rather than from the bag or girdle in which money was usually carried, possibly point to the stealthiness with which the "gift" (or, bribe) is offered to the judge.

24. *before him*] Set straight before his eyes as the mark to which they look. Others, following the LXX. and Vulg., interpret the verse, Wisdom is seen in the clear, stedfast look of the wise man as contrasted with the wandering gaze of the fool.

25. Cp. v. 21. Here is added a reference to the sorrow which the folly of a child brings specially to the mother.

26. *Nor to strike &c.*] Better, and to strike the noble (in character rather than in rank) is against right. Cp. John xviii. 23.

27. Better, A man of calm (or noble) spirit is a man of understanding.

28. *is esteemed*] Or, "is" (simply). The maxim would imply that silence is in any case good.

XVIII. 1. The text and the marginal readings indicate the two chief constructions of this somewhat difficult verse. Other renderings are

(1) He who separateth himself from others seeks his own desire, and rushes forward against all wise counsel : a warning against self-will and the self-assertion

which exults in differing from the received customs and opinions of mankind.

(2) He who separates himself (from the foolish, unlearned multitude) seeks his own desire (that which is worthy to be desired), and minglet himself with all wisdom. So the Jewish commentators generally.

Between (1) blaming and (2) commending the life of isolation, the decision must be that (1) is most in harmony with the temper of the Book of Proverbs; but it is not strange that Pharisaism, in its very name, separating and self-exalting, should have adopted (2).

2. Another form of egotism. In "understanding," i.e. self-knowledge, the "fool" finds no pleasure; but self-assertion, talking about himself and his own opinions, is his highest joy.

3. *with ignominy*] Better, "together with baseness comes reproach." The outer shame follows close upon the inner.

4. The parallelism of the two clauses is probably one of contrast. If so, the proverb is a comparison between all teaching from without and that of the light within. "The words of a man's mouth" are dark as the "deep waters" of a pool, or tank ("deep waters" being associated in the Old Testament with the thought of darkness and mystery; cp. xx. 5; Ps. lxxix. 2; Eccles. vii. 24); but "the well-spring of wisdom is

- 5 *It is not good to accept the person of the wicked,
To overthrow the righteous in judgment.*
- 6 A fool's lips enter into contention,
And his mouth calleth for strokes.
- 7 *A fool's mouth is his destruction,
And his lips are the snare of his soul.*
- 8 *The words of a talebearer are as wounds,
And they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*
- 9 He also that is slothful in his work
Is brother to him that is a great waster.
- 10 *The name of the LORD is a strong tower:
The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*
- 11 *The rich man's wealth is his strong city,
And as an high wall in his own conceit.*
- 12 *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
And before honour is humility.*
- 13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it,
It is folly and shame unto him.
- 14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity;
But a wounded spirit who can bear?
- 15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge;
And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.
- 16 *A man's gift maketh room for him,
And bringeth him before great men.*
- 17 *He that is first in his own cause seemeth just;
But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.*
- 18 The lot causeth contentions to cease,
And parteth between the mighty.
- ¹ Or, *whisperer.* ² Or, *like as when men are* ³ Heb. *chambers.* ⁴ Heb. *is set aloft.* ⁵ Heb. *returneth a word.*

as a flowing brook," bright and clear. The verse presents a contrast like that of Jer. ii. 13.

6-8. The first verse speaks of the immediate, the others of the remote, results of the "fool's" temper. First, "contention," then "strokes" or blows, then "destruction," and last, "wounds."

8. *wounds*] The word so rendered occurs here and in xxvi. 22 only. Others render it "dainties," and make the verse to describe the avidity with which men swallow in tales of scandal. They find their way to the innermost recesses of man's nature.

10. *safe*] Lit. as in the marg. *i.e.* is exalted. Cp. Ps. xviii. 33.

11. What the name of the Lord is to the righteous (v. 10), that wealth is to the rich. He flees to it for refuge as to a strong city; but it is so only "in his own conceit" or imagination.

high] In the Hebrew the same word as "safe" (v. 10), and manifestly used in reference to it.

12. *before*] In the sense of priority of time.

14. *infirmity*] Bodily pain or trouble. "Spirit" in the Heb. is masculine in the first clause, feminine in the second, as though used in the latter as having lost its strength.

15. With the wise and prudent there is no loss of time. "Heart" and "ear"—the mind working within, or gathering from without materials for its thought—are, through this channel or that, ever gaining knowledge.

16. The "gift" (or, bribe), by a bold personification, appears as the powerful "friend at court," who introduces another, and makes him welcome in high places.

17. A protest against another fault in judging. Haste is hardly less evil than corruption. "Audi alteram partem" should be the rule of every judge.

18. *his neighbour*] The other party to the suit "searcheth," *i.e.* scrutinizes and detects him.

18. Cp. xvi. 33 note. A tacit appeal to

- 19 A brother offended *is harder to be won than a strong city*;
And *their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*
- ^m ch. 12. 14. & 13. 2. 20 ^m A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth;
And with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.
- ⁿ See Matt. 12. 37. 21 ⁿ Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue;
And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
- ^o ch. 19. 14. & 31. 10. 22 ^o Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,
And obtaineth favour of the LORD.
- ^p Jam. 2. 3. 23 The poor useth intreaties;—but the rich answereth ^proughly.
- ^q ch. 17. 17. 24 A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly;
^qAnd there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.
- ^a ch. 28. 6. **CHAP. 19. BETTER** ^ais the poor that walketh in his integrity,
Than *he that is* perverse in his lips, and is a fool.
- 2 Also, *that* the soul *be* without knowledge, *it is* not good;
And he that hasteth with *his* feet sinneth.
- ^b Ps. 37. 7. 3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way;
^bAnd his heart fretteth against the LORD.
- ^c ch. 14. 20. 4 ^cWealth maketh many friends;
But the poor is separated from his neighbour.
- ^d ver. 9. Ex. 23. 1. Deut. 19. 16, 19. 5 ^dA false witness shall not be ¹unpunished,
And *he that* speaketh lies shall not escape.
- ^e ch. 6. 19. & 21. 24. 6 ^eMany will intreat the favour of the prince;
And ^eevery man *is* a friend to ²him that giveth gifts.
- ^f ch. 29. 20. & 17. 8. & 18. 16. & 21. 14. 7 ^fAll the brethren of the poor do hate him;
^fHow much more do his friends go ^hfar from him?
^fHe pursueth *them with* words, *yet they are* wanting to him.
- ^g ch. 14. 20. & Ps. 38. 11. ¹ Heb. held innocent. ² Heb. a man of gifts.

the Divine Judge gave a fairer prospect of a just decision than corruption (v. 16) or hasty onesidedness (v. 17).

19. The meaning of the first clause is obtained in the A.V. by the insertion of the words in italics, and it seems on the whole to be the best. The LXX. and Vulg. give an entirely different rendering, based, apparently, upon a different text.

20. The general sense is plain. A man must for good or evil take the consequence of his words, as well as his deeds. Cp. marg. refl.

22. The sense seems to require, "Whoso findeth a good wife," as in some Chaldee MSS.; but the proverb-writer may be looking at marriage in its ideal aspect, and sees in every such union the hands of God joining together man and woman for their mutual good. The LXX. adds "He who casts out a good wife, casts away that which is good: but he that keepeth an adulteress is foolish and ungodly."

23. Note the paradox. The poor man, of whom one might expect roughness, supplements; the rich, well-nurtured, from whom one might look for courtesy, answers harshly and brusquely.

24. Better, "A man of many companions is so to his own destruction, but there is a friend (the true, loving friend) &c." It is not the multitude of so-called friends that helps us. They may only embarrass and perplex. What we prize is the one whose love is stronger and purer even than all ties of kindred.

XIX. 1. The "perverse" man is the rich fool, as contrasted with the poor man who is upright.

Both vv. 1 and 2 are wanting in the LXX.

3. The unwisdom which, having brought about disasters by its own perverseness, then turns round and "fretteth," i.e. angrily murmurs against the Providence of God.

perverteth Rather, "overturneth," "maketh to fail."

6. *intreat the favour* &c.] Lit. "stroke the face" of the man of princely nature, who gives munificently.

7. It seems best to follow the Vulgate in taking the last clause as a separate maxim, "He who pursues words, nought are they;" i.e. the fair speeches and promises of help come to nothing. A various reading in the

- 8 He that getteth ¹wisdom loveth his own soul :
 He that keepeth understanding ²shall find good. ¹ ch. 16. 20.
- 9 ^kA false witness shall not be unpunished,
 And *he that speaketh lies shall perish.* ^k ver. 5.
- 10 Delight is not seemly for a fool ;
 Much less ¹for a servant to have rule over princes. ¹ ch. 30. 22.
- 11 ^mThe ²discretion of a man deferreth his anger ;
ⁿAnd *it is* his glory to pass over a transgression. Ecc. 10. 6, 7.
^m ch. 14. 29.
 Jam. 1. 19.
ⁿ ch. 16. 32.
- 12 ^oThe king's wrath *is* as the roaring of a lion ;
 But his favour *is* ²as dew upon the grass. ^o ch. 16. 14.
 & 20. 2.
 & 28. 15.
^p Hos. 14. 5.
- 13 ^qA foolish son *is* the calamity of his father :
^rAnd the contentions of a wife *are* a continual dropping. ^q ch. 10. 1.
 & 15. 20.
 & 17. 21, 25.
^r ch. 21. 9.
 & 27. 15.
 & 2 Cor. 12. 14.
- 14 ^sHouse and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers :
 And ^ta prudent wife *is* from the LORD. ^s ch. 18. 22.
^t ch. 6. 9.
 & ch. 10. 4.
 & 20. 13.
 & 23. 21.
^v Luke 10. 28.
 & 11. 28.
^w ch. 28. 27.
 Ecc. 11. 1.
 Matt. 10. 42.
 2 Cor. 9. 6, 7, 8.
 Heb. 6. 10.
^x ch. 13. 24.
 & 23. 13.
 & 29. 17.
- 15 ^uSlothfulness casteth into a deep sleep ;
 And an idle soul shall ²suffer hunger.
- 16 ^vHe that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul ;
 But he that despiseth his ways shall die.
- 17 ^wHe that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD ;
 And ³that which he hath given will he pay him again.
- 18 ^aChasten thy son while there is hope,
 And let not thy soul spare ⁴for his crying.
- 19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment :
 For if thou deliver *him*, yet thou must ⁵do it again.
- ¹ Heb. *an heart*. ³ Or, *his deed*. *to cause him to die*.
² Or, *prudence*. ⁴ Or, *to his destruction* : or, ⁵ Heb. *add*.

Hebrew gives, "he pursues after words, and these he shall have"—*i.e.* these, and nothing else.

This and other like maxims do not in reality cast scorn and shame on a state which Christ has pronounced "blessed." Side by side with them is *v.* 1, setting forth the honour of an upright poverty. But as there is an honourable poverty, so there is one which is altogether inglorious, caused by sloth and folly, leading to shame and ignominy, and it is well that the man who wishes to live rightly should avoid this. The teaching of Christ is, of course, higher than that of the Book of Proverbs, being based upon a fuller revelation of the Divine Will, pointing to a higher end and a nobler standard of duty, and transcending the common motives and common facts of life.

8. *wisdom*] Lit., as in the marg., to gain a "heart," *i.e.* the higher faculties both of reason and feeling, is identical with gaining wisdom, *i.e.* the faculty which seeks and finds.

10. "Delight," high unrestrained enjoyment, is to the "fool" who lacks wisdom but a temptation and a snare. The second clause carries the thought on to what the despotism of Eastern monarchies often presented, the objectionable rule of some favoured slave, it might be, of alien birth, over the princes and nobles of the land.

13. *calamity*] The Hebrew word is plural (as in Pss. lvii. 1, xci. 3), and seems to express the multiplied and manifold sorrow caused by the foolish son.

continual dropping] The irritating, unceasing, sound of the fall, drop after drop, of water through the chinks in the roof.

15. *casteth into a deep sleep*] Better, **causeth deep sleep to fall.**

16. *keepeth his own soul*] *i.e.* His life in the truest and highest sense.

17. Note the original greatness of the thought. We give to the poor. Have we lost our gift? No, what we gave, we have lent to One Who will repay with usury. Cp. the yet nobler truth of our Lord's teaching (Matt. xxv. 40).

18. *while there is hope*] While he is still young, and capable of being reformed.

crying] Better, as in the margin, **Do not set thy soul on his destruction**; words which either counsel forbearance in the act of chastisement (cp. Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21); or urge that a false clemency is a real cruelty. The latter sense is preferable. The father is warned that to forbear from chastising is virtually to expose the son who needs it to a far worse penalty.

19. The sense of the last words seems to be that the connexion between wrath and punishment is so invariable, that all efforts

- ^b Ps. 37. 37. 20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction,
That thou mayest be wise ^bin thy latter end.
- ^c Job 23. 13. ^a There are many devices in a man's heart;
Ps. 33. 10. Nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.
ch. 16. 1.
- Isai. 14. 26. 22 The desire of a man *is* his kindness:
& 46. 10. And a poor man *is* better than a liar.
- Acts 5. 39. 23 ^aThe fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life:
Heb. 6. 17. And *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied;
^d 1 Tim. 4. 8. He shall not be visited with evil.
- ^e ch. 15. 19. 24 ^aA slothful man hideth his hand in *his* bosom,
& 26. 13, 15. And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.
- ^f ch. 21. 11. 25 ¹Smite a scorner, and the simple ¹will beware:
^g Deut. 13. 11. And ^areprove one that hath understanding, *and* he will under-
^h ch. 9. 8. stand knowledge.
- 26 He that wasteth *his* father, *and* chaseth away *his* mother,
ⁱ ch. 17. 2. *Is* ^aa son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.
- 27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction
That causeth to err from the words of knowledge.
- 28 ^aAn ungodly witness scorneth judgment:
And ^athe mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.
- ^j Job 15. 10. 29 Judgments are prepared for scorners,
& 20. 12. ¹And stripes for the back of fools.
& 34. 7.
- ^k ch. 10. 13. **CHAP. 20. WINE** ^a*is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging.
& 26. 9. And whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
- ^l Gen. 9. 21. 2 ^bThe fear of a king *is* as the roaring of a lion:
ch. 23. 29. Whoso provoketh him to anger ^csinneth against his own soul.
Isai. 23. 7.
Hos. 4. 11.
^m ch. 16. 14.
& 19. 12.
ⁿ ch. 8. 30.

¹ Heb. *will be cunning*.² Heb. *A witness of Belial*.

to save the passionate man from the disastrous consequences which he brings on his own head are made in vain.

21. Contrast the many purposes of man, shifting, changing, from good to better, from bad to worse, and the one unchanging righteous "counsel" of Jehovah.

22. The "liar" is probably the man, who makes false excuses for not giving, and so is inferior to the poor man, whose "desire," the wish to do good, is taken, in the absence of means to carry it into effect, for the act of kindness itself.

23. *shall abide satisfied*] Better, one that is satisfied hath a sure abiding-place. The word "abide" has, most probably, here as elsewhere, its original sense of "passing the night." Even in the hour of darkness he shall be free from fear.

24. *hideth his hand in his bosom*] Better, dippeth his hand in the dish (cp. 2 K. xxi. 13). The scene brought before us is that of an Eastern feast. There are no knives, or forks, or spoons. Every guest has to help himself, or be helped by the host. Cp. John xiii. 26.

25. Words which embrace nearly the whole theory of punishment. If the man

who offends is a "scorner," hardened beyond all hope of reformation, then punish him by way of retribution and example, and let the penalty be sharp, that even the unwary and careless may beware. If the man be "understanding," then let the punishment take the form of discipline. Admonish, reprove, educate.

26. Or, A son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach, is one that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother.

27. Lit. Cease, my son, to hear instruction, that thou mayest err from the words of knowledge; advice given ironically to do that to which his weakness leads him, with a clear knowledge of the evil to which he is drifting.

28. *ungodly witness*] Lit. "Witness of Belial," "worthless," "untruthful." *devoureth iniquity*] Seizes on it eagerly, as a dainty, lives on it.

XX. 1. "Wine" and "strong drink" are personified as themselves doing what they make men do. The latter (see Lev. x. ⁹ note) is here, probably, the "palm-wine" of Syria.

2. *sinneth against his own soul*] i.e. Against his own life (cp. Hab. ii. 10).

- 3 ^a *It is an honour for a man to cease from strife :*
But every fool will be meddling. ^d ch. 17. 14.
- 4 ^a *The sluggard will not plow by reason of the ¹ cold ;*
^c *Therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.* ^a ch. 10. 4.
& 19. 24.
^c ch. 19. 15.
^d ch. 18. 4.
- 5 ^a *Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water ;*
But a man of understanding will draw it out.
- 6 ^a *Most men will proclaim every one his own ² goodness :*
But ^a *a faithful man who can find ?*
- 7 ^a *The just ^a man walketh in his integrity :*
¹ *His children are blessed after him.*
- 8 ^a *A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment*
Scattereth away all evil with his eyes.
- 9 ^a *Who can say, I have made my heart clean,*
I am pure from my sin ?
- 10 ^a *Divers weights, and ^a divers measures,*
Both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.
- 11 *Even a child is ^a known by his doings,*
Whether his work be pure, and whether *it be right.*
- 12 ^a *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,*
The LORD hath made even both of them.
- 13 ^a *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty ;*
Open thine eyes, *and* thou shalt be satisfied with bread.
- 14 *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer :*
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.
- 15 *There is gold, and a multitude of rubies :*
But ^a *the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.*
- 16 ^a *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger :*
And take a pledge of him for a strange woman.
- ^a Job 29. 12,
16-19.
ch. 3. 15.
& 8. 11.
^c ch. 22. 26,
27.
- ¹ Or, winter.
² Or, bounty.
- ^a Heb. *A stone and a stone.*
^a Heb. *An ephah and an ephah.*

3. *meddling*] See xvii. 14 note.

4. Ploughing-time in Palestine is in November and December, when the wind blows commonly from the North.

5. The contest between reticence on the one side and pertinacity in search on the other is represented as by a parable. The well may be very deep (cp. marg. ref.), but the "man of understanding" has skill enough to draw up the water even to the last drop. Every question is, as it were, a turning of the windlass.

6. *goodness*] With the special sense of bounty, beneficence. Contrast promise and performance. Men boast of their liberality, and we look in vain for the fulfilment of actual obligations.

9. A warning voice against the spirit, which, ignorant of its own guilt, is forward to condemn others.

10. See xi. 1: Here perhaps, as a companion to v. 9, with a wider application to all judging one man by rules which we do not apply to ourselves or to another.

11. The graces or the faults of children are not trifles. "The child is father of the man;" and the earliest actions are prophecies of the future, whether it will be pure and right, or unclean and evil.

12. Not only do we owe the gifts of sight and hearing to Jehovah, but He, being the giver, will also call us to account for them (cp. Ps. xciv. 9).

13. *open thine eyes*] Be vigilant and active. That is the secret of prosperity.

14. *naught*] Bad, worthless (2 K. ii. 19).

15. *a precious jewel*] Lit. "A vessel of preciousness," i.e. most precious of all are "the lips of knowledge."

16. The warning against suretiship and lust are here repeated and combined (cp. xxvii. 13). The judge tells the creditor to seize the goods of the surety who has been weak enough to pledge himself for those who are alien to him, instead of those of the actual debtor. The reading of the A.V. recalls in the second clause the history of Tamar (Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18). The Hebrew

- * ch. 9. 17. 17 ¹ Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man ;
But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.
- * ch. 15. 22. 18 ² Every purpose is established by counsel :
& 24. 6. ³ And with good advice make war.
v Lukel4.31.
- * ch. 11. 13. 19 ² He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets :
a Rom. 16. Therefore meddle not with him ^a that ² flattereth with his lips.
18.
- * Ex. 21. 17. 20 ^b Whoso curseth his father or his mother,
c Job 18. 5, 6. ^c His ³ lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.
ch. 24. 20.
- * ch. 23. 20. 21 ^d An inheritance *may* be gotten hastily at the beginning ;
c Hab. 2. 6. ^e But the end thereof shall not be blessed.
- f Deut. 32. 35. 22 ^f Say not thou, I will recompense evil ;
ch. 17. 13. ^g But ^g wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.
& 24. 29.
- 1 Thess. 5. 15. 23 ^h Divers weights *are* an abomination unto the LORD ;
1 Pet. 3. 9. And ⁴ a false balance *is* not good.
- v 2 Sam. 10. 12. 24 ⁱ Man's goings *are* of the LORD ;
h vor. 10. How can a man then understand his own way ?
- i Ps. 37. 23. 25 *It is* a snare to the man *who* devoureth *that which is* holy,
ch. 16. 9. And ^k after vows to make enquiry.
- Jer. 10. 23. 26 ^l A wise king scattereth the wicked,
k Eccl. 5. 4, 5. And bringeth the wheel over them.
- i Ps. 101. 5. ver. 8.
- m 1 Cor. 2. 11. 27 ^m The spirit of man *is* the ⁵ candle of the LORD,
Searching all the inward parts of the belly.

¹ Heb. Bread of lying, or, falsehood.

² Or, enticeth.
³ Or, candle.

⁴ Heb. balances of deceit.
⁵ Or, lamp.

text, however, gives "strangers" in the masculine plural, and is probably right, the feminine being the reading of the margin, probably adopted from xxvii. 13.

17. "To eat gravel" was a Hebrew (Lam. iii. 16), and is an Arabic, phrase for getting into trouble. So "bread," got by deceit, tastes sweet at first, but ends by leaving the hunger of the soul unsatisfied. There is a pleasure in the sense of cleverness felt after a hard bargain or a successful fraud, which must be met by bidding men look on the after consequences.

19. *flattereth*] Lit. "The man who opens his lips," who has no reticence; such a man, with or without intending it, does the work of a talebearer.

20. A connecting link between Lev. xx. 9 and Matt. xv. 4. The words, "his lamp shall be put out," describe the failure of outward happiness.

21. Or, *An inheritance gotten hastily* (greedily sought after by unjust means) *at the beginning, the end thereof shall not be blessed.* Another reading gives, "an inheritance loathed, (cp. Zech. xi. 8), or with a curse upon it." The A.V. agrees with the Versions.

22. God's awarding to everyone according to his works, is the true check to the spirit of vindictiveness (cp. Rom. xii. 17, 19). Note that man is not told to wait on the Lord in expectation of seeing vengeance on his

enemies, but "He shall save thee." The difference of the two hopes, in their effect upon the man's character, is incalculable.

24. The order of a man's life is a mystery even to himself. He knows not whither he is going, or for what God is educating him.

25. Better, *It is a snare to a man to utter a vow* (of consecration) *rashly, and after vows to enquire* whether he can fulfil them. Both clauses are a protest against the besetting sin of rash and hasty vows. Cp. marg. ref.

26. *the wheel*] The threshing-wheel (Isai. xxviii. 27, 28), which passes over the corn and separates the grain from the chaff. The proverb involves therefore the idea of the division of the good from the evil, no less than that of the punishment of the latter.

27. *The spirit of man*] The "breath" of Gen. ii. 7, the higher life, above that which he has in common with lower animals, coming to him direct from God. Such a life, with all its powers of insight, consciousness, reflection, is as a lamp which God has lighted, throwing its rays into the darkest recesses of the heart. A yet higher truth is proclaimed in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel. The candle, or lamp of Jehovah, derives its light from "the Light that lighteth every man," even the Eternal Word.

28 ^a Mercy and truth preserve the king :
And his throne is upholden by mercy.

^a Ps. 101. 1.
ch. 29. 14.

29 The glory of young men *is* their strength :
And ^o the beauty of old men *is* the grey head.

^o ch. 16. 31.

30 The blueness of a wound ¹cleanseth away evil :
So *do* stripes the inward parts of the belly.

CHAP. 21. THE king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water :

He turneth it whithersoever he will.

2 ^a Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes :
^b But the LORD pondereth the hearts

^a ch. 16. 2.

3 ^c To do justice and judgment
Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

^b ch. 24. 12.
Luke 16. 15.
^c 1 Sam. 15. 22.

4 ^d An high look, and a proud heart,
And ³ the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.

Ps. 50. 8.
ch. 15. 8.
Isai. 1. 11, &c.

5 ^e The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plenteousness ;
But of every one *that is* hasty only to want.

Hos. 6. 6.
Mic. 6. 7, 8.
^e ch. 6. 17.

6 ^f The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
Is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

^e ch. 10. 4. & 13. 4.
^f ch. 10. 2. & 13. 11.

7 The robbery of the wicked shall ⁴destroy them ;
Because they refuse to do judgment.

& 20. 21.
2 Pet. 2. 3.

8 The way of man *is* froward and strange :
But *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.

9 ^o It *is* better to dwell in a corner of the housetop,
Than with ⁵ a brawling woman in ⁶ a wide house.

^o ver. 19.
ch. 10. 13.
& 25. 24.
& 27. 15.

¹ Heb. *is a purging medicine against evil.*

³ Or, *the light of the wicked.*
⁴ Heb. *saw them, or, dwell with them.*

⁵ Heb. *a woman of contentions.*
⁶ Heb. *an house of society.*

30. Better, The blueness of a wound *is* a cleansing of evil, so are the stripes that go down to the inward parts of the belly.

The open sores of wounds left by the scourge, unclean and foul as they seem, are yet a cleansing, purifying process for evil ; so also are the stripes that reach the inward parts of the belly, *i.e.* the sharp reproofs, the stings of conscience, which penetrate where no scourge can reach, into the inner life of man. Chastisement, whatever be its nature, must be real ; the scourge must leave its mark, the reproof must go deep.

XXI. 1. *rivers of water*] See Ps. i. 3 note. As the cultivator directs the stream into the channels where it is most wanted, so Jehovah directs the thoughts of the true king, that his favours may fall, not at random, but in harmony with a Divine order.

3. Cp. marg. reff. The words have a special significance as coming from the king who had built the Temple, and had offered sacrifices that "could not be numbered for multitude" (1 K. viii. 5).

4. *the plowing*] The Heb. word, with a change in its vowel-points, may signify either (1) the "fallow-field," the "tillage" of

xiii. 23, or (2) the lamp. According to (1) the verse would mean, "The outward signs of pride, the proud heart, the broad lands of the wicked, all are evil." (2) however belongs, as it were, to the language of the time and of the Book (xiii. 9, xxiv. 20). The "lamp of the wicked" is their outwardly bright prosperity.

5. Here diligence is opposed, not to sloth but to haste. Undue hurry is as fatal to success as undue procrastination.

6. *vanity*] Or, "a breath driven to and fro of those that are seeking death." Another reading of the last words is, "of the snares of death" (cp. 1 Tim. vi. 9). Some commentators have suggested that the "vapour" or "mist" is the mirage of the desert, misleading those who follow it, and becoming a "net of death."

7. *robbery*] Probably the "violence" which the wicked practise. *shall destroy them*] More literally, *carries them away.*

8. Or, "Perverse is the way of a sin-burdened man."

9. *a wide house*] Lit. "a house of companionship," *i.e.* a house shared with her. The flat roof of an Eastern house was

- ^a Jam. 4. 5. 10 ^aThe soul of the wicked desireth evil:
His neighbour ¹findeth no favour in his eyes.
- ^c ch. 19. 25. 11 ^cWhen the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise:
And when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.
- 12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked:
But God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.
- ^k Matt. 7. 2. & 18. 30, &c. Jam. 2. 13. 13 ^kWhoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor,
He also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.
- ⁱ ch. 17. 8, 23. & 18. 16. 14 ⁱA gift in secret pacifieth anger:
And a reward in the bosom strong wrath.
- ^m ch. 10. 20. 15 *It is* joy to the just to do judgment:
^mBut destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.
- 16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding
Shall remain in the congregation of the dead.
- 17 He that loveth ²pleasure *shall be* a poor man:
He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.
- ⁿ ch. 11. 8. Isai. 43. 3, 4. 18 ⁿThe wicked *shall be* a ransom for the righteous,
And the transgressor for the upright.
- ^o ver. 9. 19 ^o*It is* better to dwell ³in the wilderness,
Than with a contentious and an angry woman.
- ^p Ps. 112. 3. 20 ^p*There is* treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the
wise;
But a foolish man spendeth it up.
- ^q ch. 15. 9. Matt. 5. 6. 21 ^qHe that followeth after righteousness and mercy
Findeth life, righteousness, and honour.
- ^r Eccl. 9. 14, &c. 22 ^rA wise man scaleth the city of the mighty,
And casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.
- ^s ch. 12. 13. & 13. 3. & 18. 21. Jam. 3. 2. 23 ^sWhoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue
Keepeth his soul from troubles.

¹ Heb. *is not favoured*.² Or, *sport*.³ Heb. *in the land of the desert*.

often used for retirement by day, or in summer for sleep by night. The corner of such a roof was exposed to all changes of weather, and the point of the proverb lies in the thought that all winds and storms which a man might meet with there are more endurable than the tempest within.

12. Or, The Righteous One (Jehovah) regardeth well the house of the wicked, and maketh the wicked fall into mischief.

16. congregation of the dead] The Rephaim (cp. ii. 18 note).

remain] i.e. "He shall find a resting-place, but it shall be in Hades."

17. wine and oil] i.e. The costly adjuncts of a princely banquet. The price of oil or precious unguent was about equal to the 300 days' wages of a field labourer (Matt. xx. 2). Indulgence in such a luxury would thus become the type of all extravagance and excess.

18. Cp. marg. ref. Evil doers seem to

draw down the wrath of God upon their heads, and so become, as it were, the scape-goats of the comparatively righteous.

20. *spendeth it up*] Lit. *swalloweth it*. The wise man keeps a store in reserve. He gains uprightly, spends moderately, never exhausts himself. But the proverb may have also a higher application. The wise man stores up all "treasure to be desired" of wisdom, all "oil" of divine influence, which strengthens and refreshes, and so is ready at all times for the work to which the Master calls him. Cp. Matt. xxv. 1-13.

21. The man who keeps "righteousness" will assuredly find it, but he will find besides it the "life" and the "honour" which he was not seeking. Cp. 1 K. iii. 13; Matt. vi. 33.

22. Even in war, counsel does more than brute strength. So of the warfare which is carried on in the inner battle-field of the soul. There also wisdom is mighty to the "pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. x. 4,

- 24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name,
Who dealeth ¹in proud wrath.
- 25 ¹The desire of the slothful killeth him;
For his hands refuse to labour.
- 26 He coveteth ²greedily all the day long:
But the "righteous giveth and spareth not.
- 27 ²The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination:
How much more, when he bringeth it ²with a wicked mind?
- 28 ³A false witness shall perish:
But the man that heareth speaketh constantly.
- 29 A wicked man hardeneth his face:
But as for the upright, he ⁴directeth his way.
- 30 ²There is no wisdom nor understanding
Nor counsel against the LORD.
- 31 ¹The horse is prepared against the day of battle:
But ⁵safety is of the LORD.

¹ ch. 13. 4.

² Ps. 37. 26.
& 112. 9.
³ Ps. 50. 9.
Isai. 60. 3.
Jer. 6. 20.
Amos 5. 22.
⁴ ch. 19. 5, 9.

⁵ Isai. 8. 9,
10.
Jer. 9. 23.
Acts 5. 39.
⁶ Ps. 20. 7.
& 33. 17.
Isai. 31. 1.
⁷ Ps. 3. 8.
⁸ Eccl. 7. 1.

CHAP. 22. A ¹GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches,
And ⁶loving favour rather than silver and gold.

- 2 ¹The rich and poor meet together:
The LORD is the maker of them all.
- 3 ²A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself:
But the simple pass on, and are punished.
- 4 ⁷By humility and the fear of the LORD
Are riches, and honour, and life.
- 5 ¹Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward:
⁸He that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

⁹ ch. 29. 13.
1 Cor. 12. 21.
¹⁰ Job 31. 15.
ch. 14. 31.
¹¹ ch. 14. 16.
& 27. 12.
¹² Ps. 112. 3.
Matt. 6. 33.
¹³ ch. 15. 19.
¹⁴ 1 John 5.
18.

¹ Heb. in the wrath of pride.

² Heb. in wickedness?

³ Heb. A witness of lies.

⁴ Or, considereth.

⁵ Or, victory.

⁶ Or, favour is better than, &c.

⁷ Or, The reward of humility, &c.

where St. Paul uses the very words of the LXX. Version of this passage), and the wise man scales and keeps the city which the strong man armed has seized and made his own.

25. *killeth him*] He wastes his strength and life in unsatisfied longings for something which he has not energy to gain. The wish to do great or good things may sometimes be taken for the deed, but if the hindrance is from a man's own sloth, it does but add to his condemnation.

26. *all the day long*] Better, every day. The wish of the slothful man passes into restless, covetous, dissatisfied desire; the righteous, free from that desire, gives without grudging.

27. A lower depth even than xv. 8. The wicked man may connect his devotion with his guilt, offer his sacrifice and vow his vow (as men have done under heathenism or a corrupted Christianity) for success in the perpetration of a crime.

28. *speaketh constantly*] His testimony abides evermore who repeats simply what

he has heard, whether from the lips of men or from the voice within, in contrast with "the false witness."

29. *directeth*] i.e. Makes straight and firm. On one side it is the callousness of guilt, on the other the confidence of integrity.

30, 31. Two companion-proverbs. Nothing avails against, nothing without, God. The horse is the type of warlike strength, used chiefly or exclusively in battle. 1 K. iv. 26, x. 26-28, may be thought of as having given occasion to the latter of the two proverbs.

XXII. 1. Omit "good." The word is an insertion. To the Hebrew, "name" by itself conveyed the idea of good repute, just as "men without a name" (cp. Job xxx. 8 marg.) are those sunk in ignominy. The marg. gives a preferable rendering of the second clause of this verse.

2. Cp. marg. reff. Another recognition of the oneness of a common humanity, overriding all distinctions of rank.

3. 4. Better, (cp. marg.) The reward of humility (is) the fear of the Lord, "riches, and honour, and life."

- ^h Eph. 6. 4. 6 ^{h1} Train up a child ² in the way he should go;
² Tim. 3. 15. And when he is old, he will not depart from it.
- ⁱ Jam. 2. 6. 7 ⁱ The rich ruleth over the poor,
 And the borrower ^{is} servant ³ to the lender.
- ^k Job 4. 8. 8 ^k He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity :
 Hos. 10. 13. ⁴ And the rod of his anger shall fail.
- ^l 2 Cor. 9. 6. 9 ^{l5} He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed ;
 For he giveth of his bread to the poor.
- ^m Gen. 21. 9, 10. 10 ^m Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out ;
 Ps. 101. 5. Yea, strife and reproach shall cease.
- ⁿ Ps. 101. 6. 11 ⁿ He that loveth pureness of heart,
 ch. 18. 13. ⁶ For the grace of his lips the king *shall be* his friend.
- 12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge,
 And he overthroweth ⁷ the words of the transgressor.
- ^o ch. 20. 13. 13 ^o The slothful man saith, *There is a lion without,*
 I shall be slain in the streets.
- ^p ch. 2. 18. 14 ^p The mouth of strange women *is* a deep pit :
 & 5. 3. ^q He that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.
- ^q Eccl. 7. 26. 15 Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child ;
 & 23. 27. But ^r the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.
- ^r ch. 13. 24. 16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his *riches*,
 & 19. 18. And he that giveth to the rich, *shall* surely *come* to want.
- ^s 23. 13, 14. 17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,
 & 20. 15, 17. And apply thine heart unto my knowledge.
- 18 For *it is* a pleasant thing if thou keep them ⁸ within thee ;
 They shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

¹ Or, Catechise.² Heb. in his way.³ Heb. to the man that lendeth.⁴ Or, and with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed.⁵ Heb. Good of eye.⁶ Or, and hath grace in his lips.⁷ Or, the matters.⁸ Heb. in thy belly.

6. Train] Initiate, and so, educate.
the way he should go] Or, according to the tenor of his way, i.e. the path specially belonging to, specially fitted for, the individual's character. The proverb enjoins the closest possible study of each child's temperament and the adaptation of "his way of life" to that.

8. the rod of his anger] That with which he smites others (cp. Isai. xiv. 6). The A. V. describes the final impotence of the wrath of the wicked.

9. He that hath a bountiful eye] Lit., as in the marg., contrasted with the "evil eye" of xxviii. 22.

11. More lit., "He that loveth pureness of heart, his lips are gracious, the king is his friend."

13. The point of the satire is the ingenuity with which the slothful man devises the most improbable alarms. He hears that "there is a lion without," i.e., in the broad open country; he is afraid of being slain in the very streets of the city.

14. The fall of the man into the snare of the harlot seems to be the consequence of

the abhorrence or wrath of Jehovah. That abhorrence is, however, the result of previous evil. The man is left to himself, and sin becomes the penalty of sin.

16. Better, He who oppresses the poor for his own profit gives (i.e. will, in the common course of things, be compelled to give) to a rich man, and that only to his own loss. Ill-gotten gains do not prosper, and only expose the oppressor to extortion and violence in his turn.

17. This is the commencement of a new and entirely distinct section, opening, after the fashion of iii. 1, 21, iv. 1, vii. 1, with a general exhortation (vv. 17-21) and passing on to special precepts. The "words of the wise" may be a title to the section: cp. xxiv. 23. The general characteristics of this section appear to be (1) a less close attention to the laws of parallelism, and (2) a tendency to longer and more complicated sentences. Cp. Introduction, p. 342.

18. What is "pleasant" in the sight of God and man is the union of two things, belief passing into profession, profession resting on belief.

- 19 That thy trust may be in the LORD,
I have made known to thee this day, ¹ even to thee.
- 20 Have not I written to thee ² excellent things
In counsels and knowledge,
- 21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; ³ Luke 1. 3, 4.
⁴ That thou mightest answer the words of truth ⁵ to them that ⁶ send unto thee; ⁷ 1 Pet. 3. 15.
- 22 ⁸ Rob not the poor, because he is poor:
⁹ Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:
- 23 ¹⁰ For the LORD will plead their cause,
And spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.
- 24 Make no friendship with an angry man;
And with a furious man thou shalt not go:
- 25 Lest thou learn his ways,—and get a snare to thy soul.
- 26 ¹¹ Be not thou one of them that strike hands,
Or of them that are sureties for debts.
- 27 If thou hast nothing to pay,
Why should he ¹² take away thy bed from under thee?
- 28 ¹³ Remove not the ancient ¹⁴ landmark,
Which thy fathers have set.
- 29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business?
He shall stand before kings;
He shall not stand before ¹⁵ mean men.

¹ ch. 8. 6.

⁸ Ex. 23. 6.

Job 31. 16.

21.

⁹ Zech. 7. 10.

Mal. 3. 5.

¹⁰ 1 Sam. 24.

12.

& 25. 39.

Ps. 12. 5.

& 35. 1, 10.

& 68. 5.

& 140. 12.

ch. 23. 11.

Jer. 51. 36.

¹¹ ch. 6. 1.

& 11. 15.

¹² ch. 20. 16.

¹³ Deut. 19.

14.

& 27. 17.

ch. 23. 10.

CHAP. 23. WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider diligently what *is* before thee:
2 And put a knife to thy throat,
If thou be a man given to appetite.

¹ Or, trust thou also.

² Or, to those that send thee?

³ Or, bound.

⁴ Heb. obscure men.

19. *even to thee*] The wide general character of the teaching does not hinder its being a personal message to every one who reads it.

20. *excellent things*] A meaning of the word derived from "the third," i.e. "the chief of three warriors in a chariot" (cp. Exod. xiv. 7 note). Another reading of the Hebrew text gives "Have I not written to thee long ago?" and this would form a natural antithesis to "this day" of v. 19. The rendering of the LXX. is "write them for thyself three times;" that of the Vulgate, "I have written it (i.e. my counsel) in three-fold form;" the "three times" or "three-fold form" being referred either to the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, or to the division of the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa.

21. *to them that send unto thee*] Better as in the marg.; cp. x. 26. The man who has learnt the certainty of the words of truth will learn to observe it in all that men commit to him.

22. i.e. "Do not be tempted by the helplessness of the poor man to do him wrong;" some prefer, "Refrain from doing him wrong through pity for his helplessness."

the gate] The place where the rulers of the

city sit in judgment. The words point to the special form of oppression of which unjust judges are the instruments.

26. *strike hands*] i.e. Bind themselves as surety for what another owes (cp. marg. ref.).

27. *he*] i.e. The man to whom the surety has been given. The practice of distraining for payment of a debt, seems, though prohibited (Ex. xxii. 27), to have become common.

28. A protest against the grasping covetousness (Isai. v. 8) which is regardless of the rights of the poor upon whose inheritance men encroach (cp. marg. ref.). The not uncommon reference of the words to the "landmarks" of thought or custom, however natural and legitimate, is foreign to the mind of the writer.

29. The gift of a quick and ready intellect is to lead to high office, it is not to be wasted on a work to which the obscure are adequate.

XXIII. 1. *what is before thee*] Beware lest dainties tempt thee to excess. Or, "consider diligently who is before thee," the character and temper of the ruler who invites thee.

2. i.e. "Restrain thy appetite, eat as if the knife were at thy throat." Others render the words "thou wilt put a knife to

- 3 Be not desirous of his dainties :—for they *are* deceitful meat.
- ^a ch. 28. 20. 4 ^a Labour not to be rich :—^b cease from thine own wisdom.
- 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. 5 ¹ Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ?
- ^b ch. 3. 5. For *riches* certainly make themselves wings ;
- Rom. 12. 16. They fly away as an eagle toward heaven.
- ^c Ps. 141. 4. 6 ^c Eat thou not the bread of *him that hath* ^d an evil eye,
- ^d Deut. 15. 9. Neither desire thou his dainty meats : ^e
- 7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he :
- ^e Ps. 12. 2. Eat and drink, ^e saith he to thee ;
- But his heart *is* not with thee.
- 8 The morsel *which* thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up,
- And lose thy sweet words.
- ^f ch. 9. 8. 9 ^f Speak not in the ears of a fool :
- Matt. 7. 6. For he will despise the wisdom of thy words.
- ^g Deut. 19. 14. 10 ^g Remove not the old ² landmark ;
- & 27. 17. And enter not into the fields of the fatherless :
- ch. 22. 28. 11 ^h For their redeemer *is* mighty ;
- ^h Job 31. 21. He shall plead their cause with thee.
- ch. 22. 23. 12 Apply thine heart unto instruction,
- And thine ears to the words of knowledge.
- ⁱ ch. 13. 24. 13 ⁱ Withhold not correction from the child :
- & 19. 18. For *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.
- & 22. 15. 14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod,
- & 29. 15. And ^k shalt deliver his soul from hell.
- ^l 1 Cor. 5. 5. 15 My son, ² if thine heart be wise,
- ^l ver. 24. 25. My heart shall rejoice, ³ even mine.
- ch. 29. 3. 16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice,—when thy lips speak right things.

¹ Heb. *Wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly upon.*

² Or, *bound.*

³ Or, *even I will rejoice.*

thy throat" &c., i.e. "indulgence at such a time may endanger thy very life."

3. *dainties...deceitful meat*] Such as "savoury meat," venison (Gen. xxvii. 4), offered not from genuine hospitality, but with some by-ends.

4. *cease from thine own wisdom*] i.e. "Cease from the use of what is in itself most excellent, if it only serves to seek after wealth, and so ministers to evil." There is no special contrast between "thine own wisdom" and that given from above, though it is of course implied that in ceasing from his own prudence the man is on the way to attain a higher wisdom.

5. *set thine eyes*] Lit. as in the marg., i.e. "gaze eagerly upon;" and then we get an emphatic parallelism with the words that follow, "they fly away as an eagle towards heaven;" "certainly make themselves wings."

6. A different danger from that of v. 1. The hazard here is the hospitality of the purse-proud rich, avaricious or grudging even in his banquets.

evil eye] Not with the later associations of a mysterious power for mischief, but simply, as in marg. ref. and in Matt. xx. 15.

7. *thinketh*] The Hebrew verb is found here only, and probably means, "as he is all along in his heart, so is he (at last) in act."

9. The "fool" here is one willfully and persistently deaf to it, almost identical with the scorner.

11. The reason is given for the precept (v. 10).

their redeemer] See Job xix. 25 note. It was the duty of the *Goel*, the next of kin, to take on himself, in case of murder, the office of avenger of blood (Num. xxxv. 19). By a slight extension the word was applied to one who took on himself a like office in cases short of this. Here, therefore, the thought is that, destitute as the fatherless may seem, there is One Who claims them as His next of kin, and will avenge them. Jehovah Himself is in this sense their *Goel*, their Redeemer.

13, 14. i.e., "You will not kill your son by scourging him, you may kill him by withholding the scourge."

14. *hell*] Sheol, the world of the dead.

15-35. Another continuous exhortation rather than a collection of maxims.

16. The teacher rejoices when the disciple's heart (v. 15) receives wisdom, and yet more when his lips can utter it.

- 17 ^m Let not thine heart envy sinners :
But ⁿ *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long.
- 18 ^o For surely there is an ¹ end ;
And thine expectation shall not be cut off.
- 19 Hear thou, ^p *my* son, and be wise,
And ^q guide thine heart in the way.
- 20 ^r Be not among ^s winebibbers ;—among riotous eaters ² of
flesh :
- 21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty :
And ^t drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.
- 22 ^u Harken unto thy father that begat thee,
And despise not thy mother when she is old.
- 23 ^v Buy the truth, and sell *it* not ;
Also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.
- 24 ^w The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice :
And he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of *him*.
- 25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad,
And she that bare thee shall rejoice.
- 26 My son, give me thine heart,
And let thine eyes observe my ways.
- 27 ^x For a whore *is* a deep ditch ;
And a strange woman *is* a narrow pit.
- 28 ^y She also lieth in wait ³ as *for* a prey,
And increaseth the transgressors among men.
- 29 ^z Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ?
Who hath contentions ? who hath babbling ?
Who hath wounds without cause ?
Who ^a hath redness of eyes ?
- 30 ^b They that tarry long at the wine ;
They that go to seek ^c mixed wine.
- 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it giveth his colour in the cup,
When it moveth itself aright.

^m ch. 3. 31.
& 24. 1.
ⁿ ch. 28. 14.
^o Ps. 37. 37.
ch. 24. 14.
Luke 16. 25.
^p ch. 4. 23.
^q Isai. 5. 22.
Matt. 24. 49.
Rom 13. 13.
Eph. 5. 18.
^r ch. 19. 15.
^s ch. 1. 8.
& 30. 17.
Eph. 6. 1, 2.
^t ch. 4. 5, 7.
Matt. 13. 44.
^u ch. 10. 1.
& 15. 20.
ver. 15.

^x ch. 22. 14.

^y ch. 7. 12.
Eccl. 7. 26.

^z Isai. 5. 11,
22.

^a Gen. 49. 12.

^b ch. 20. 1.
Eph. 5. 18.
^c Ps. 75. 8.
ch. 9. 2.

Or, reward.

^s Heb. of *their flesh*.

³ Or, as a robber.

reins] See Job xix. 27 note.

17. *envy sinners*] Cp. in Pss. xxxvii. 1, lxxiii. 3, the feeling which looks half longingly at the prosperity of evil doers. Some connect the verb "envy" with the second clause, "envy not sinners, but envy, emulate, the fear of the Lord."

18. Or, For if there is an end (hereafter), thine expectations shall not be cut off. There is an implied confidence in immortality.

20. *riotous eaters of flesh*] The word is the same as "glutton" in v. 21 and Deut. xxi. 20.

21. The three forms of evil that destroy reputation and tempt to waste are brought together.

drowsiness] Specially the drunken sleep, heavy and confused.

26. *observe*] Another reading gives, "let thine eyes *delight* in my ways."

28. *as for a prey*] Better as in the marg.

the transgressors] Better, "the treacherous," those that attack men treacherously.

29. *woe...sorrow*] The words in the original are interjections, probably expressing distress. The sharp touch of the satirist reproduces the actual inarticulate utterances of drunkenness.

30. *mixed wine*] Wine flavoured with aromatic spices, that increase its stimulating properties (Isai. v. 22). There is a touch of sarcasm in "go to seek." The word, elsewhere used of diligent search after knowledge (xxv. 2; Job xi. 7; Ps. cxxxix. 1), is here used of the investigations of connoisseurs in wine meeting to test its qualities.

31. *his colour*] Lit. "its eye," the clear brightness, or the beaded bubbles on which the wine-drinker looks with complacency.

it moveth itself aright] The Hebrew word describes the pellucid stream flowing pleasantly from the wine-skin or jug into the goblet or the throat (cp. Song of Sol. vii. 9), rather than a sparkling wine.

- 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like ¹ an adder.
33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women,
And thine heart shall utter perverse things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down ² in the midst of the
sea,

Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

- ^d ch. 27. 22.
Jer. 5. 3.
* Eph. 4. 19.
† See Deut.
29. 19.
Isai. 58. 12.
* Ps. 37. 1,
&c.
& 73. 3.
ch. 3. 31.
& 23. 17.
ver. 19.
^b Prov. 1. 15.
* Ps. 10. 7.
- 35 ^a They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and ¹ I was not sick;
They have beaten me, and ³ I felt it not:
[†] When shall I awake?—I will seek it yet again.

CHAP. 24. BE not thou ^a envious against evil men,

^b Neither desire to be with them.

- 2 ^c For their heart studieth destruction,
And their lips talk of mischief.

3 Through wisdom is an house builded;
And by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.

5 ^d A wise man ⁴ is strong;
Yea, a man of knowledge ⁵ increaseth strength.

6 ^e For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war:
And in multitude of counsellors *there is* safety.

7 ^f Wisdom is too high for a fool:
He openeth not his mouth in the gate.

8 He that ^g deviseth to do evil
Shall be called a mischievous person.

9 The thought of foolishness is sin:
And the scorner is an abomination to men.

10 *If thou faint in the day of adversity,—thy strength is* ^h small.

11 ⁱ If thou forbear to deliver *them that are* drawn unto death,
And *those that are* ready to be slain;

12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not;
Doth not ^j he that pondereth the heart consider it?

¹ Or, a cockatrice.

² Heb. in the heart of the
sea.

³ Heb. I knew it not.

⁴ Heb. is in strength.

⁵ Heb. strengtheneth might.

⁶ Heb. narrow.

32. *adder*] Said to be the Cerastes, or horned snake.

34. The passage is interesting, as showing the increased familiarity of Israelites with the experiences of sea-life (cp. Pss. civ. 25, 26, cvil. 23-30).

in the midst of the sea] i.e. When the ship is in the trough of the sea and the man is on the deck. The second clause varies the form of danger, the man is in the "cradle" at the top of the mast, and sleeps there, regardless of the danger.

35. The picture ends with the words of the drunkard on waking from his sleep. Unconscious of the excesses of the night, his first thought is to return to his old habit.

When shall I awake, &c.] Better, when I shall awake I will seek it yet again.

XXIV. 1. A lesson given before, now combined with another. True followers

after wisdom will admit neither envy of evil on the one hand, nor admiration or fellowship with it on the other.

3, 4. The "house" is figurative of the whole life, the "chambers" of all regions, inward and outward, of it.

5. *is strong*] Lit. as in marg.; i.e. rooted and established in strength.

7. *in the gate*] Cp. xxii. 2* note.

11. Lit.

"Deliver those that are drawn unto death, And those who totter to the slaughter—if thou withdraw..."

i.e. "O withdraw them," save them from their doom; in contrast to v. 10. The structure and meaning are both somewhat obscure; but the sentence is complete in itself, and is not a mere hypothesis concluded in the following verses.

12. As v. 11 warned men against acqui-

And he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know it?

- And shall *not* he render to every man ^a according to his works? ^b Job 34. 11. Ps. 62. 12. Jer. 32. 19. Rom. 2. 6. Rev. 2. 23. ^c Cant. 5. 1. ^d Ps. 19. 10. & 119. 108. ^e ch. 23. 18.

13 My son, ¹eat thou honey, because it is good;

And the ²honeycomb, which is sweet ³to thy taste:

14 ⁴So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul:

When thou hast found it, ⁵then there shall be a reward,

And thy expectation shall not be cut off.

15 ⁶Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; ⁷Ps. 10. 9, 10.

Spoil not his resting place:

16 ⁸For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again:

⁹But the wicked shall fall into mischief. ¹⁰Ps. 34. 19. & 37. 24. Mic. 7. 8. ¹¹Ezth. 7. 10. Amos 6. 2. Rev. 18. 21. ¹²Job 31. 29. Ps. 35. 15. ch. 17. 5. Obad. 12. ¹³Ps. 37. 1. & 73. 3. ch. 23. 17. ver. 1. ¹⁴Ps. 11. 6. ¹⁵Job 18. 5. & 21. 17. ch. 13. 9. & 20. 20. ¹⁶Rom. 13. 7. 1 Pet. 2. 17.

17 ¹⁷Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,

And let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

18 Lest the LORD see it, and ¹⁸it displease him,

And he turn away his wrath from him.

19 ¹⁹Fret not thyself because of evil men,

Neither be thou envious at the wicked;

20 For ²⁰there shall be no reward to the evil man;

²¹The ²²candle of the wicked shall be put out.

21 My son, ²³fear thou the LORD and the king:

And meddle not with ²⁴them that are given to change:

22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly;

And who knoweth the ruin of them both?

23 These things also belong to the wise.

²⁵It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

24 ²⁶He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous;

Him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:

¹ Heb. upon thy palate.

² Heb. it be evil in his eyes.

³ Or, Keep not company with the wicked.

⁴ Or, lamp.

⁵ Heb. changers.

⁶ Ps. 34. 19. & 37. 24. Mic. 7. 8. ⁷ Ezth. 7. 10. Amos 6. 2. Rev. 18. 21. ⁸ Job 31. 29. Ps. 35. 15. ch. 17. 5. Obad. 12. ⁹ Ps. 37. 1. & 73. 3. ch. 23. 17. ver. 1. ¹⁰ Ps. 11. 6. ¹¹ Job 18. 5. & 21. 17. ch. 13. 9. & 20. 20. ¹² Rom. 13. 7. 1 Pet. 2. 17. ¹³ Lev. 19. 15. Dent. 1. 17. ch. 18. 5. & 28. 21. John 7. 24. ¹⁴ ch. 17. 15. Isai. 5. 23.

escing in an unrighteous tyranny, so this denounces the tendency to hush up a wrong with the false plea of ignorance. Cp. Eccles. v. 8. Verses 10-12 thus form a complete and connected whole.

13. Honey entered largely into the diet of Hebrew children (Isai. vii. 15), so that it was as natural an emblem for the purest and simplest wisdom, as the "sincere milk of the word" was to the New Testament writers. The learner hears what seems a rule of diet—then (v. 14) the parable is explained.

14. the knowledge of wisdom] Better, Know that thus (like the honey) is wisdom to thy soul.

15, 16. The teaching of the proverb warns men not to attack or plot against the righteous. They will lose their labour, "Though the just man fall (not into sin, but into calamities), yet he riseth up." The point of the teaching is not the liability of good men to err, but God's providential care over them (cp. marg. refl.). "Seven times" is a certain for an uncertain number (cp. Job v. 19). In contrast with this is the

fate of the evil-doers, who fall utterly even in a single distress.

18. See marg. The meaning is "Thy joy will be suicidal, the wrath of the righteous Judge will be turned upon thee, as the greater offender, and thou wilt have to bear a worse evil than that which thou exultest in."

20. no reward] Lit. "no future," no life worthy to be called life, no blessing.

21. them that are given to change] Those that seek to set aside the worship of the true God, or the authority of the true king, who represents Him.

22. both] Those who fear not God, and those who fear not the king.

23. belong to the wise] Either "are fitting for the wise, addressed to them," or (as in the superscriptions of many of the Psalms) "are written by the wise." Most recent commentators take it in the latter sense, and look on it as indicating the beginning of a fresh section, containing proverbs not ascribed to Solomon's authorship. Cp. Introduction, p. 342.

- 25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight.
And ¹ a good blessing shall come upon them.
- 26 *Every man* shall kiss *his* lips
² That giveth a right answer.
- ^a 1 K. 5. 17, 18. Luke 14. 28. 27 ^a Prepare thy work without,
And make it fit for thyself in the field;
And afterwards build thine house.
- ^b Eph. 4. 25. 28 ^b Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause;
And deceive *not* with thy lips.
- ^c ch. 20. 22. Matt. 5. 39, 44. Rom. 12. 17, 18. 29 ^c Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me:
I will render to the man according to his work.
- ^d Gen. 3. 18. 30 I went by the field of the slothful,
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
31 And, lo, ^d it was all grown over with thorns,
And nettles had covered the face thereof,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
32 Then I saw, and ³ considered it well:
I looked upon it, and received instruction.
- ^e ch. 6. 9. 33 ^e Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth;
And thy want as ⁴ an armed man.
- ^a 1 K. 4. 32. **CHAP. 25.** ^a THESE are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men
of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.
- ^b Deut. 29. 29. Rom. 11. 33. ^c Job 29. 16. 2 ^b It is the glory of God to conceal a thing:
But the honour of kings is ^c to search out a matter.
3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth,
And the heart of kings ⁵ is unsearchable.
- ¹ Heb. a blessing of good. ³ Heb. set my heart. ⁵ Heb. there is no searching.
² Heb. that answereth right words. ⁴ Heb. a man of shield.

25. There is no surer path to popularity than a righteous severity in punishing guilt.

26. Better, He shall kiss lips that giveth a right answer, i.e. he shall gain the hearts of men as much as by all outward signs of sympathy and favour. Cp. 2 Sam. xv. 1-6.

27. i.e. Get an estate into good order before erecting a house on it. To "build a house" may, however, be equivalent (cp. Ex. i. 21; Deut. xxv. 9; Ruth iv. 11) to "founding a family;" and the words a warning against a hasty and imprudent marriage. The young man is taught to cultivate his land before he has to bear the burdens of a family. Further, in a spiritual sense, the "field" may be the man's outer common work, the "house" the dwelling-place of his higher life. He must do the former faithfully in order to attain the latter. Neglect in one is fatal to the other. Cp. Luke xvi. 10, 11.

28. deceive not with thy lips] Better, wilt thou deceive with thy lips?

29. A protest against vindictiveness in every form. Cp. marg. ref.

30. The chapter ends with an apologue,

which may be taken as a parable of something yet deeper. The field and the vineyard are more than the man's earthly possessions. His neglect brings barrenness or desolation to the garden of the soul. The "thorns" are evil habits that choke the good seed, and the "nettles" are those that are actually hurtful and offensive to others. The "wall" is the defence which laws and rules give to the inward life, and which the sluggard learns to disregard, and the "poverty" is the loss of the true riches of the soul, tranquillity, and peace, and righteousness.

33, 34. See vi. 11 note.

XXV. 1. A new section. See p. 342. copied out] In the sense of a transfer from oral tradition to writing.

2. The earthly monarch might be, in some respects, the type of the heavenly, but here there is a marked contrast. The king presses further and further into all knowledge; God surrounds Himself as in "thick darkness," and there are secrets unrevealed even after the fullest revelation.

3. The other side of the thought of v. 2. What the mind of God is to the searchers

- 4 ^aTake away the dross from the silver,
 And there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. ^d2Tim. 2. 21.
- 5 ^cTake away the wicked *from* before the king,
 And ^bhis throne shall be established in righteousness. ^ech. 20. 8.
^fch. 16. 12.
 & 29. 14.
- 6 ¹Put not ¹with thyself in the presence of the king,
 And stand not in the place of great men:
 7 ²For better *it is* ¹that it be said unto thee, Come up hither;
 Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the
 prince ^gLuke 14. 8,
 9, 10.
 Whom ¹thine eyes have seen.
- 8 ^hGo not forth hastily to strive,
 Lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, ^hch. 17. 14.
 When thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. ⁱMatt. 5. 25.
- 9 ⁱDebate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*;
 And ²discover not a secret to another: ⁱMatt. 5. 25.
- 10 Lest he that heareth *it* put thee to shame,
 And thine infamy turn not away.
- 11 ^kA word ³fitly spoken
 Is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. ^kch. 15. 23.
 Isai. 50. 4.
- 12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,
 So is a wise reprovcr upon an obedient ear.
- 13 ¹As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
 So is a faithful messenger to them that send him:
 For he refresheth the soul of his masters. ^lch. 13. 17.

¹ Heb. Set ~~not~~ out thy glory.

² Or, discover not the secret of another.

³ Heb. spoken upon his wheels.

after knowledge, that the heart of the true and wise king is to those who try to guess its counsels.

5. The interpretation of the proverb of v. 4. The king himself, like the Lord Whom he represents, is to sit as "a refiner of silver" (Mal. iii. 3).

6, 7. The pushing, boastful temper is, in the long run, suicidal. It is wiser as well as nobler to take the lower place at first in humility, than to take it afterwards with shame. Cp. marg. ref. *g*, which is one of the few instances in which our Lord's teaching was fashioned, as to its outward form, upon that of this Book.

8. The general meaning is, it is dangerous to plunge into litigation. At all times there is the risk of failure, and, if we fail, of being at the mercy of an irritated adversary. Without the italics, the clause may be rendered, "Lest thou do something (*i.e.* something humiliating and vexatious) at the end thereof."

9. An anticipation of the highest standard of ethical refinement (Matt. xviii. 15), but with a difference. Here the motive is prudential, the risk of shame, the fear of the irretrievable infamy of the betrayer of secrets. In the teaching of Christ the precept rests on the Divine Authority and the perfect Example.

11. *apples of gold*] Probably the golden-coloured fruit set in baskets (*i.e.* chased vessels of open-worked silver); so is a word

spoken upon its wheels (*i.e.* moving quickly and quietly on its way). The proverb may have had its origin in some kingly gift to the son of David, the work of Tyrian artists, like Hiram and his fellows. Others gazed on the cunning work and admired, but the wise king saw in the costly rarity a parable of something higher. "A word well set upon the wheels of speech" excelled it. Ornamentation of this kind in the precious metals was known, even as late as in the middle ages, as *cœur de Salomon*.

12. The theme of this proverb being the same as that of v. 11, its occurrence suggests the thought that rings used as ornaments for ears, or nose, or forehead, and other trinkets formed part of the works of art spoken of in the foregoing note, and that the king had something at once pointed and wise to say of each of them.

13. A picture of the growing luxury of the Solomonic period. The "snow in harvest" is not a shower of snow or hail, which would be terrifying and harmful rather than refreshing (cp. 1 Sam. xii. 17, 18); but, rather, the snow of Lebanon or Hermon put into wine or other drink to make it more refreshing in the scorching heat of May or June at the king's summer-palace on Lebanon (1 K. ix. 19; S. of S. vii. 4 notes). More reviving even than the iced wine-cup was the faithful messenger. Contrast x. 20.

- * ch. 20. 6. 14 ^mWhoso boasteth himself ¹of a false gift
 * Jude 12. *Is like* * clouds and wind without rain.
 * Gen. 32. 4. 15 ^oBy long forbearing is a prince persuaded,
 1 Sam. 25. And a soft tongue breaketh the bone.
 24, &c. 16 ^pHast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee,
 ch. 15. 1. Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.
 & 16. 14. 17 ²Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house;
 * ver. 27. Lest he be ³weary of thee, and *so* hate thee.
 * Ps. 57. 4. 18 ^aA man that beareth false witness against his neighbour
 & 120. 3, 4. *Is* a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.
 ch. 12. 18. 19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble
Is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.
 20 *As* he that taketh away a garment in cold weather,
 And *as* vinegar upon nitre,
 So *is* he that ^rsingeth songs to an heavy heart.
 * Dar. 6. 18. 21 ^eIf thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
 Rom. 12. 15. And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
 * Ex. 23. 4, 5. 22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,
 Matt. 5. 44. And the LORD shall reward thee.
 * 2 Sam. 16. 12. 23 ^uThe north wind driveth away rain:
 * Job 37. 22. So *doth* an angry countenance ^aa backbiting tongue.
 * Ps. 101. 5.

¹ Heb. in a gift of falsehood.

² Or, Let thy foot be seldom

in thy neighbour's house.

³ Heb. full of thee.

⁴ Or, The north wind bring-

eth forth rain: so *doth* a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.

14. The disappointment caused by him who promises much and performs little or nothing, is likened to the phenomena of an eastern climate; the drought of summer, the eager expectation of men who watch the rising clouds and the freshening breeze, the bitter disappointment when the breeze dies off, and the clouds pass away, and the wished-for rain does not come.

15. *a soft tongue*] Winning and gentle speech does what it seems at first least capable of doing; it overcomes obstacles which are as bones that the strongest jaws would fail to crush.

16. *Hast thou found honey?*] Cp. Judg. xiv. 8; 1 Sam. xiv. 27. The precept extends to the pleasure of which honey is the symbol.

17. *Let thy foot be seldom in the house of thy friend, &c.* Though thy visits were sweet as honey, he may soon learn to loathe them.

18. *maul*] A heavy sledge hammer. The word is connected with "malleus;" its diminutive "mallet" is still in use.

19. Stress is to be laid on the uselessness of the "broken tooth" and the "foot out of joint," or tottering, rather than on the pain connected with them. The A. V. loses the emphasis and point of the Hebrew by inverting the original order, which is "a broken...joint is confidence" &c.

20. Examples of un wisdom and incon-

gruity sharpen the point of the proverb. Pouring vinegar upon nitre or potash utterly spoils it. The effervescence caused by the mixture is perhaps taken as a type of the irritation produced by the "songs" sung out of season to a heavy heart.

The verb rendered "taketh away" may have the sense (as in Ezek. xvi. 11) of "adorning one's-self," and the illustration would then be, "as to put on a fine garment in time of cold is unseasonable, so is singing to a heavy heart."

21, 22. A precept reproduced by St. Paul (Rom. xii. 20); the second clause of which seems at first sight to suggest a motive incompatible with a true charity. Lev. xvi. 12 suggests an explanation. The High Priest on the Day of Atonement was to take his censer, to fill it with "coals of fire," and then to put the incense thereon for a sweet-smelling savour. So it is here. The first emotion in another caused by the good done to him may be one of burning shame, but the shame will do its work and the heart also will burn, and prayer and confession and thanksgiving will rise as incense to the throne of God. Thus, "we shall overcome evil with good."

23. The marginal reading is far more accurate and gives a better sense. The N. W. wind in Palestine commonly brings rain, and this was probably in the thought of the writer.

- 24 ^v *It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop,
• Than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.* 7 ch. 19. 13.
& 21. 9, 19.
- 25 *As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
So is good news from a far country.*
- 26 *A righteous man falling down before the wicked
Is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.*
- 27 ^a *It is not good to eat much honey:
So for men ^a to search their own glory is not glory.* 8 ver. 18.
9 ch. 27. 2.
- 28 ^b *He that hath no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* 10 ch. 16. 32.
- CHAP. 26.** *As snow in summer, ^a and as rain in harvest,
So honour is not seemly for a fool.* 11 1 Sam. 12.
17.
- 2 *As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying,
So ^b the curse causeless shall not come.* 12 Num. 23. 8.
Deut. 23. 5.
13 Ps. 32. 9.
14 ch. 10. 13.
- 3 *A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
And a rod for the fool's back.*
- 4 *Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also be like unto him.*
- 5 ^c *Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in ¹ his own conceit.* 15 Matt. 10.
1-4.
16 21. 24-27.
- 6 *He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool
Cutteeth off the feet, and drinketh ² damage.*
- 7 *The legs of the lame ³ are not equal:
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.*
- ¹ Heb. *his own eyes.* ² Or, *violence.* ³ Heb. *are lifted up.*

24. Cp. xxi. 9 note.
25. The craving of wanderers for tidings from the home they have left is as a consuming thirst, the news that quenches it as a refreshing fountain.

26. *falling down before*] i.e. Yielding and cringing. To see this instead of steadfastness, is as grievous as for the traveller to find the spring at which he hoped to quench his thirst turbid and defiled.

27. *So for men &c.*] A difficult sentence, the text of which is probably defective. The words are not in the original. Many commentators render: *so to search into weighty matters is itself a weight*, i.e. men soon become satiated with it as with honey. Possibly a warning against an over-curious searching into the mysteries of God's word or works.

XXVI. 1. In Palestine there is commonly hardly any rain from the early showers of spring to October. Hence "rain in harvest" became sometimes (see marg. ref.) a supernatural sign, sometimes, as here, a proverb for whatever was strange and incongruous.

2. i.e. "Vague as the flight of the sparrow, aimless as the wheelings of the swallow, is the causeless curse. It will never reach its goal." The marginal reading in the Hebrew, however, gives "to him" instead

of "not" or "never;" i.e. "The causeless curse, though it may pass out of our ken, like a bird's track in the air, will come on the man who utters it." Cp. the English proverb, "Curses, like young chickens, always come home to roost."

4, 5. Two sides of a truth. To "answer a fool according to his folly" is in v. 4 to bandy words with him, to descend to his level of coarse anger and vile abuse; in v. 5 it is to say the right word at the right time, to expose his unwisdom and untruth to others and to himself, not by a teaching beyond his reach, but by words that he is just able to apprehend. The apparent contradiction between the two verses led some of the Rabbis to question the canonical authority of this Book. The Pythagoreans had maxims expressing a truth in precepts seemingly contradictory.

6. *cutteeth off the feet*] Mutilates him, spoils the work which the messenger ought to fulfil.

drinketh damage] i.e. "has to drink full draughts of shame and loss" (cp. Job xv. 16).

7. Or, *Take away the legs of the lame man, and the parable that is in the mouth of fools*: both are alike useless to their possessors. Other meanings are (1) "The legs of the lame man are feeble, so is a

8 ¹As he that bindeth a stone in a sling,
So ^{is} he that giveth honour to a fool.

9 *As* a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard,
So *is* a parable in the mouth of fools.

10 ²The great *God* that formed all *things*
Both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

^e 2 Pet. 2. 22. 11 ¹As a dog returneth to his vomit,
^f Ex. 8. 15. ²So a fool ³returneth to his folly.

^a ch. 29. 20. 12 ¹Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?
Luke 18. 11. *There is* more hope of a fool than of him.
Rom. 12. 16.
Rev. 3. 17.

^h ch. 22. 13. 13 ¹The slothful *man* saith, *There is* a lion in the way;
A lion *is* in the streets.

14 *As* the door turneth upon his hinges,
So *doth* the slothful upon his bed.

ⁱ ch. 19. 24. 15 ¹The slothful hideth his hand in *his* bosom;
⁴It grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

16 The sluggard *is* wiser in his own conceit
Than seven men that can render a reason.

17 He that passeth by, and ⁵meddleth with strife *belonging* not to him,
Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

18 As a mad *man* who casteth ⁶firebrands, arrows, and death,

^k Eph. 5. 4. 19 So *is* the man *that* deceiveth his neighbour,
And saith, ^kAm not I in sport?

^l ch. 22. 10. 20 ⁷Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out:
So ⁷where *there is* no ⁸talebearer, the strife ⁹ceaseth.

^m ch. 15. 18. ⁿ 21 ¹As coals *are* to burning coals, and wood to fire;
& 29. 22. So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.

¹ Or, *As he that putteth a precious stone in an heap of stones.*

² Or, *A great man grieveth all, and he hireth the*

fool, he hireth also transgressors.

³ Heb. *iterateth his folly.*

⁴ Or, *he is weary.*

⁵ Or, *is enraged.*

⁶ Heb. *flames, or, sparks.*

⁷ Heb. *Without wood.*

⁸ Or, *whisperer.*

⁹ Heb. *is silent.*

parable in the mouth of fools." (2) "The lifting up of the legs of a lame man, *i.e.* his attempts at dancing, are as the parable in the mouth of fools."

8. *i.e.* "To give honour to the fool is like binding a stone in a sling; you cannot throw it." In each case you misapply and so waste. Others render in the sense of the marg.: To use a precious stone where a pebble would be sufficient, is not less foolish than to give honour to a fool.

9. Better, "As a thorn which is lifted up in the hand of the drunkard" &c. As such a weapon so used may do mischief to the man himself or to others, so may the sharp, keen-edged proverb when used by one who does not understand it.

10. The word "God" is not in the original, and the adjective translated "great" is never used elsewhere absolutely in that sense. The simplest and best interpretation

is, *As the archer that woundeth every one, so is he who hireth the fool, and he who hireth every passer-by.* Acting at random, entrusting matters of grave moment to men of bad repute, is as likely to do mischief as to shoot arrows at every one.

13. Cp. marg. ref. note. Here there is greater dramatic vividness in the two words used: (1) A roaring one, (2) ^a lion, more specifically.

15. *grieveth him*] Better, *wearieth him.*

16. *seven*] The definite number used for the indefinite (cp. xxiv. 16).

reason] Better, *a right judgment.*

18, 19. The teacher cuts off the plea men make when they have hurt their neighbour by lies, that they "did not mean mischief," that they were ^a only in fun." Such ^a jesting is like that of the madman flinging firebrands or arrows.

21. *coals*] Charcoal.

22 ^aThe words of a talebearer *are* as wounds,
^aAnd they go down into the ¹innermost parts of the belly.

^a ch. 18. 8.

23 Burning lips and a wicked heart
Are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

24 He that hateth ²dissembleth with his lips,
 And layeth up deceit within him;

25 ^oWhen he ³speaketh fair, believe him not:
 For *there* are seven abominations in his heart.

^o Ps. 28. 3.
 Jer. 9. 8.

26 *Whose* ⁴hatred is covered by deceit,
 His wickedness shall be shewed before the *whole* congregation.

27 ^pWhoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein:
 And he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

^p Ps. 7. 15.
 & 9. 15.
 ch. 28. 10.
 Eccl. 10. 8.

28 A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it;
 And a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

CHAP. 27. BOAST ^anot thy self of ⁵to morrow;
 For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

^a Luke 12.
 19, 20.
 Jam. 4. 13,
 &c.
^b ch. 25. 27.

2 ^bLet another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth;
 A stranger, and not thine own lips.

3 A stone *is* ⁶heavy, and the sand weighty;
 But a fool's wrath *is* heavier than them both.

4 ⁷Wrath *is* cruel, and anger *is* outrageous;
 But ^cwho *is* able to stand before ⁸envy?

^c 1 John 3.
 12.
^d ch. 28. 23.
 Gal. 2. 14.
^e Ps. 141. 5.

5 ^dOpen rebuke *is* better than secret love.

6 ^eFaithful *are* the wounds of a friend;
 But the kisses of an enemy *are* ⁹deceitful.

7 The full soul ¹loatheth an honeycomb;
 But ^fto the hungry soul every bitter thing *is* sweet.

^f Job 6. 7.

¹ Heb. chambers.

² Or, is known.

³ Heb. maketh his voice gracious.

⁴ Or, hatred is covered in secret.

⁵ Heb. to morrow day.

⁶ Heb. heaviness.

⁷ Wrath is cruelty, and

anger an overflowing.

⁸ Or, jealousy? ch. 6. 34.

⁹ Or, earnest, or, frequent.

¹ Heb. treadeth under foot.

22. Cp. marg. ref. note.

23. Burning lips] i.e. "Lips glowing with affection, uttering warm words of love," joined with a malignant heart, are like a piece of broken earthenware from the furnace, which glitters with the silver drops that stick to it, but is itself worthless.

25. seven abominations] Cp. v. 16 note. Here "seven" retains, perhaps, its significance as the symbol of completeness. Evil has, as it were, gone through all its work, and holds its accursed Sabbath in the heart in which all things are "very evil."

26. Better, "Hatred is covered by deceit, but in the midst of the congregation his wickedness will be made manifest," i.e. then, in the time of need, the feigned friendship will pass into open enmity.

27. rolleth a stone] The illustration refers, probably, to the use made of stones in the rough warfare of an earlier age. Cp. Judg. ix. 53; 2 Sam. xi. 21. The man is supposed to be rolling the stone up to the heights.

28. The lying tongue hates its victims. . . XXVII. 2, another] An "alienus" rather than "alius." Praise to be worth anything must be altogether independent.

3. Cp. Eccclus. xxii. 15; a like comparison between the heaviest material burdens and the more intolerable load of unreasoning passion.

4. envy] Better, as in the marg., the violence of passion in the husband who thinks himself wronged (cp. vi. 34).

5. secret love] Better, love that is hidden; i.e. love which never shows itself in this one way of rebuking faults. Rebuke, whether from friend or foe, is better than such love.

6. deceitful] Better, abundant. Very lavish is the enemy of the kisses that cover perfidy, but lavish of them only. His courtesy goes no deeper.

7. The special instance covers the general law, that indulgence in pleasure of any kind brings on satiety and weariness, but self-

- 8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place.
- 9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart:
So doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.
- 10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not;
Neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity:
For ⁹ better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.
- ⁹ ch. 17. 17.
& 18. 24.
See ch. 19. 7.
¹⁰ ch. 10. 1.
& 23. 15, 24.
¹¹ Ps. 127. 5.
¹² ch. 22. 3.
- 11 ¹ My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,
'That I may answer him that reproacheth me.
- 12 ² A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself;
But the simple pass on, and are punished.
- ¹ See Ex.
22. 26.
ch. 20. 18.
- 13 'Take his garment that is surety for a stranger,
And take a pledge of him for a strange woman.
- 14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,
It shall be counted a curse to him.
- ¹¹ ch. 19. 13.
- 15 ³ A continual dropping in a very rainy day
And a contentious woman are alike.
- 16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind,
And the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.
- 17 Iron sharpeneth iron;
So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.
- ¹¹ 1 Cor. 9.
7, 13.
- 18 ⁴ Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof:
So he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.
- 19 As in water face answereth to face,
So the heart of man to man.

¹ Heb. from the counsel of the soul.

restraint multiplies the sources of enjoyment.

8. Change of place is thought of as in itself an evil. It is not easy for the man to find another home or the bird another nest. The maxim is characteristic of the earlier stages of Hebrew history, before exile and travel had made change of country a more familiar thing. Cp. the feeling which made the thought of being "a fugitive and a vagabond" (Gen. iv. 12, 13) the most terrible of all punishments.

10. "Better is a neighbour" who is really "near" in heart and spirit, than a brother who though closer by blood, is "far off" in feeling.

11. The voice of the teacher to his true disciple. He pleads with him that the uprightness of the scholar will be the truest answer to all attacks on the character or teaching of the master.

12, 13. Cp. marg. ref.

14. The picture of the ostentatious flatterer going at daybreak to pour out blessings on his patron. For any good that he does, for any thanks he gets, he might as well utter curses.

15. continual dropping] Here, as in marg. ref., the flat earthen roof of Eastern houses,

always liable to cracks and leakage, supplies the ground-work of the similitude.

16. The point is the impossibility of concealment or restraint. A man cannot hide the wind, or clasp it in his hands. If he takes an unguent in his right hand, the odour betrays him, or it slips out. So in like manner, the "contentious woman" is one whose faults it is impossible either to hide or check. The difficulty of the proverb led to a different reading, adopted by the Versions, "The north wind is rough, and yet it is called propitious:" it clears off the clouds and brings fine weather.

17. The proverb expresses the gain of mutual counsel as found in clear, well-defined thoughts. Two minds, thus acting on each other, become more acute. This is better than to see in "sharpening" the idea of provoking, and the point of the maxim in the fact that the quarrels of those who have been friends are bitter in proportion to their previous intimacy.

18. waiteth] Lit. "keepeth," "observeth." As the fig-tree requires constant care but yields abundant crops, so the ministrations of a faithful servant will not be without their due reward. Cp. 2 Tim. ii. 6.

19. As we see our own face when we

- 20 °Hell and destruction are ¹never full ;
So ²the eyes of man are never satisfied. ° ch. 30. 16.
Hab. 2. 5.
° Eccl. 1. 8.
& 6. 7.
° ch. 17. 3.
- 21 °As ¹the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold ;
So ²is a man ³to his praise.
- 22 °Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat
with a pestle,
Yet will not his foolishness depart from him. ° ch. 23. 35.
Isai. 1. 5.
Jer. 5. 3.
- 23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,
And ²look well to thy herds.
- 24 For ³riches are not for ever ;
And doth the crown endure ⁴to every generation ?
- 25 °The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself,
And herbs of the mountains are gathered. ° Ps. 104. 14.
- 26 The lambs are for thy clothing,
And the goats are the price of the field.
- 27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food,
For the food of thy household,
And for the ⁵maintenance for thy maidens.
- CHAP. 28.** THE °wicked flee when no man pursueth :
But the righteous are bold as a lion. ° Lev. 26. 17,
36.
Ps. 63. 5.
- 2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof :
But ⁶by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof
shall be prolonged.

¹ Heb. *not*.
² Heb. *set thy heart*.
³ Heb. *strength*.

⁴ Heb. *to generation and generation* ?
⁵ Heb. *life*.

⁶ Or, *by men of understanding and wisdom shall they likewise be prolonged*.

look on the mirror-like surface of the water, so in every heart of man we may see our own likeness. In spite of all diversities we come upon the common human nature in which we all alike share. Others see in the reference to the reflection in the water the thought that we judge of others by ourselves, find them faithful or the reverse, as we ourselves are.

20. Hades, the world of the dead, and Destruction (Death, the destroying power, personified) have been at all times and in all countries thought of as all-devouring, insatiable (cp. marg. ref.). Yet one thing is equally so, the lust of the eye, the restless craving which grows with what it feeds on (Eccles. i. 8).

21. *so is &c.*] Better, *So let a man be to his praise, let him purify it from all the alloy of flattery and baseness with which it is too probably mixed up.*

22. *bray*] To pound wheat in a mortar with a pestle, in order to free the wheat from its husks and impurities, is to go through a far more elaborate process than threshing. But the folly of the fool is not thus to be got rid of. It sticks to him to the last; all discipline, teaching, experience seem to be wasted on him.

23-27. The verses sing the praises of the earlier patriarchal life, with its flocks and herds, and tillage of the ground, as

compared with the commerce of a later time, with money as its chief or only wealth.

23. *the state*] Lit. *face*. The verse is an illustration of John x. 3, 14.

24. *riches*] The money which men may steal, or waste, is contrasted with the land of which the owner is not so easily deprived. Nor will the crown (both the "crown of pure gold" worn on the mitre of the High-priest, Exod. xxix. 6, xxxix. 30, and the kingly diadem, the symbol of power generally) be transmitted (as flocks and herds had been) "from one generation to another."

25. *appeareth*] Better, *When the grass disappeareth*, the "tender grass sheweth itself." Stress is laid on the regular succession of the products of the earth. The "grass" ("hay") of the first clause is (cp. Ps. xxxvii. 2, xc. 5, ciii. 15; 2 K. xix. 26) the proverbial type of what is perishable and fleeting. The verse gives a picture of the pleasantness of the husbandman's calling; compared with this what can wealth or rank offer? With this there mingles (cp. v. 23) the thought that each stage of that life in its season requires care and watchfulness.

XXVIII. 2. *transgression*] Better, *rebellion*. A revolt against a ruler leads to rapid changes of dynasty (the whole history of the kingdom of Israel was a proof

^b Matt. 18.
28.

^c Ps. 10. 3.
& 49. 18.
Rom. 1. 32.
^d 1 K. 18. 18,
21.
Matt. 3. 7.
& 14. 4.
Eph. 5. 11.
^e Ps. 92. 6.
^f John 7. 17.
1 Cor. 2. 15.
1 John 2. 20.
27.
^g ch. 19. 1.
ver. 18.
^h ch. 29. 3.
ⁱ Job 27. 16,
17.
ch. 13. 22.
Eccl. 2. 26.
^k Zech. 7. 11.
^l Ps. 66. 18.
& 109. 7.
ch. 15. 8.
^m ch. 26. 27.
ⁿ Matt. 6. 33.

^o ver. 28.
ch. 11. 10.
& 29. 2.
Eccl. 10. 6.
^p Ps. 32. 3, 5.
1 John 1. 8,
9, 10.
^q Ps. 16. 8.
ch. 23. 17.
^r Rom. 2. 5.
& 11. 20.

- 3 ^b A poor man that oppresseth the poor
Is like a sweeping rain ¹ which leaveth no food.
- 4 ^c They that forsake the law praise the wicked:
^d But such as keep the law contend with them.
- 5 ^e Evil men understand not judgment:
But ^f they that seek the LORD understand all things.
- 6 ^g Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness,
Than *he that is* perverse in his ways, though he be rich.
- 7 ^h Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son:
But he that ⁱ is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.
- 8 ^j He that by usury and ^k unjust gain increaseth his substance,
He shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.
- 9 ^l He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,
^m Even his prayer shall be abomination.
- 10 ⁿ Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way,
He shall fall himself into his own pit:
^o But the upright shall have good things in possession.
- 11 The rich man is wise ^p in his own conceit;
But the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.
- 12 ^q When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory:
But when the wicked rise, a man is ^r hidden.
- 13 ^s He that covereth his sins shall not prosper:
But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have ^t mercy.
- 14 Happy is the man ^u that feareth alway:
^v But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

¹ Heb. without food.
² Or, feedeth gluttons.

³ Heb. by increase.

⁴ Heb. in his eyes.
⁵ Or, sought for.

of this), but "with men of understanding and knowledge thus shall he (the prince) continue." True wisdom will lead men to maintain an existing order. The A.V. implies that political disorders may come as the punishment of any national sin.

the state] Better, it (the land) shall surely prolong its days in stability.

3. Men raise a man of the people, poor like themselves, to power. They find him the worst oppressor of all, plundering them to their last morsels, like the storm-rain which sweeps off the seed-corn instead of bringing fertility.

5. The deep inter-dependence of morality and intellect. We have a right judgment in all things in proportion as our hearts seek to know God. Cp. James i. 23, 24.

6. *perverse in his ways*] Lit. "Perverse in his double ways." Cp. Ecclus. ii. 12; James i. 8.

8. *unjust gain*] Omit "unjust": "usury and gain" make up the notion of "gain derived from usury." Ill-gotten gains do not prosper, after a time they pass into hands that know how to use them better.

10. When the wicked succeed in tempt-

ing the righteous, Vice seems to win a triumph. But the triumph is suicidal. The tempter will suffer the punishment he deserves, and the blameless, if true to themselves, will be strengthened and enabled by the temptation.

11. Wealth blunts, poverty sharpens, the critical power of intellect.

12. *there is great glory*] Men array themselves in festive apparel, and show their joy conspicuously.

a man is hidden] Better, **men hide themselves**, they shrink and cower for fear, and yet are hunted out.

13. The conditions of freedom are confession and amendment, confession to God of sins against Him, to men of sins against them. The teaching of ethical wisdom on this point is identical with that of Psalmist, Prophet, Apostles, and our Lord Himself.

14. The "fear" here is not so much reverential awe, as anxious, or "nervous" sensitiveness of conscience. To most men this temperament seems that of the self-tormentor. To him who looks deeper it is a condition of blessedness, and the callousness which is opposed to it ends in misery.

- 15 ^a As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear;
^b So is a wicked ruler over the poor people.
- 16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor:
 But he that wanteth covetousness shall prolong his days.
- 17 ^a A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person
 Shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.
- 18 ^a Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved:
 But ^b he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.
- 19 ^a He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread:
 But he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.
- 20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings:
^a But he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be ¹ innocent.
- 21 ^b To have respect of persons is not good:
 For ^c for a piece of bread that man will transgress.
- 22 ² ^a He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye,
 And considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.
- 23 ^a He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour
 Than he that flattereth with the tongue.
- 24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression;
 The same ^d is the companion of ³ a destroyer.
- 25 ^a He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:
^b But he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.
- 26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool;
 But whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.
- 27 ^a He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack:
 But he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

^a 1 Pet. 5. 8.

^b Ex. 1. 14,
 16, 22.
^c Matt. 2. 16.

^a Gen. 9. 6.
^b Ex. 21. 14.

^a ch. 10. 9,
 25.
^b ver. 6.

^c ch. 12. 11.

^a ch. 13. 11
 & 20. 21.
 & 23. 4.

ver. 22.
 1 Tim. 6. 9.
^b ch. 18. 5.
 & 24. 23.
^c Ezek. 13. 19.
^d ver. 20.

^e ch. 27. 5, 6.

^f ch. 18. 9.

^g ch. 13. 10.
^h 1 Tim. 6. 6.

ⁱ Deut. 15. 7,
 &c.
 ch. 19. 17.

¹ Or, unpunished.

² Or, He that hath an evil

eye hasteth to be rich.

³ Heb. a man destroying.

15. The form of political wretchedness, when the poverty of the oppressed subjects not only embitters their sufferings, but exasperates the brutal ferocity of the ruler.

17. The case of wilful murder, not the lesser crime of manslaughter for which the cities of refuge were appointed. One, with that guilt on his soul, is simply hastening on to his own destruction. Those who see him must simply stand aloof, and let God's judgments fulfil themselves.

18. in his ways] Rather "in his double ways" (as in v. 6). The evil of vacillation rather than that of craft, the want of the one guiding principle of right, is contrasted with the straightforwardness of the man that "walketh uprightly."

shall fall at once] Better, shall fall in one of them (his ways). The attempt to combine incompatibilities is sure to fail. Men cannot serve God and Mammon.

20. Not the possession of wealth, nor even the acquisition of it, is evil, but the eager haste of covetousness.

shall not be innocent] Better, as in the

margin, in contrast with the many "blessings" of the "faithful."

21. Dishonest partiality leads men who have enslaved themselves to it to transgress, even when the inducement is altogether disproportionate. A "piece of bread" was proverbial at all times as the extremest point of poverty (cp. marg. ref.).

22. The covetous temper leads not only to dishonesty, but to the "evil eye" of envy; and the temper of grudging, carking care, leads him to poverty.

24. is the companion of a destroyer] i.e. He stands on the same footing as the open, lawless robber. Cp. this with our Lord's teaching as to Corban (Mark vii. 10-13).

25. shall be made fat] He shall enjoy the two-fold blessing of abundance and tranquillity (cp. xi. 25).

26. The contrast between the wisdom of him who trusts in the Lord, and the folly of self-trust.

27. hideth his eyes] i.e. Turns away from, disregards, the poor. Cp. Isai. i. 15.

* ver. 12.
ch. 29. 2.
† Job 24. 4.

α 1 Sam. 2.
25.
2 Chr. 36. 16.
ch. 1. 24-27.
b Esth. 8. 15.
ch. 11. 10.
c 28. 12, 28.
c Esth. 3. 15.
d ch. 10. 1.
& 15. 20.
& 27. 11.
e ch. 6. 9, 10.
Luke 15. 13,
30.

f Job 29. 16.
& 31. 13.
Ps. 41. 1.

ν ch. 11. 11.

h Ezek. 22.
30.

i Matt. 11. 17.

k Gen. 4. 5, 8.
1 John 3. 12.

l Judg. 16.
17.
ch. 12. 16.
& 14. 33.

m ch. 22. 2.

n Matt. 5. 45.

28 ^k When the wicked rise, ^l men hide themselves:
But when they perish, the righteous increase.

CHAP. 29. ^{1a} HE, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck,
Shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 ^b When the righteous are ² in authority, the people rejoice:
But when the wicked beareth rule, ^c the people mourn.

3 ^d Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father:
^e But he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth *his* substance.

4 The king by judgment establisheth the land:
But ³ he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

5 A man that flattereth his neighbour
Spreadeth a net for his feet.

6 In the transgression of an evil man *there is* a snare:
But the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

7 ^f The righteous considereth the cause of the poor:
But the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.

8 ^g Scornful men ⁴ bring a city into a snare:
But wise *men* ^h turn away wrath.

9 *If* a wise man contendeth with a foolish man,
ⁱ Whether he rage or laugh, *there is* no rest.

10 ^k The bloodthirsty hate the upright,
But the just seek *his* soul.

11 A ^l fool uttereth all his mind:
But a wise *man* keepeth it in till afterwards.

12 If a ruler hearken to lies,—all his servants *are* wicked.

13 The poor and ⁶ the deceitful man ^m meet together:
ⁿ The LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

¹ Heb. *A man of reproofs.*

² Or, *increased.*

³ Heb. *a man of oblations.*

⁴ Or, *set a city on fire.*

⁵ Heb. *Men of blood.*

⁶ Or, *the usurer.*

XXIX. 1. *shall be destroyed*] Lit. "shall be broken" (vi. 15). Stress is laid on the suddenness in such a case of the long-delayed retribution.

3. *spendeth* &c.] The laws of parallelism would lead us to expect "troubleth his father;" but that is passed over as a thing about which the profligate would not care, and he is reminded of what comes home to him, that he is on the road to ruin.

The king] The ruler, as the supreme fountain of all justice, and as the ideal judge, is contrasted with the taker of bribes.

6. While the offence of the wicked, rising out of a confirmed habit of evil, becomes a snare for his destruction; the righteous, even if he offend, is forgiven and can still rejoice in his freedom from condemnation. The second clause is taken by some as entirely contrasted with the first; it expresses the joy of one whose conscience is void of offence, and who is in no danger of falling into the snare.

8. *Scornful men*] The men who head political or religious revolutions, who inflame (lit. as in the marg.) the minds of the people against the powers that be.

9. All modes of teaching—the stern rebuke or the smiling speech—are alike useless with the "foolish" man; there is "no rest." The ceaseless cavilling goes on still.

10. *seek his soul*] i.e. "Care for, watch over, his life" (cp. Ps. cxlii. 4).

11. *mind*] The Hebrew word is used sometimes for "mind" or "reason," sometimes for "passion," or "wrath." The reticence commended would include both; but the verb "keepeth it in" (rendered "stilleth," in Ps. lxxv. 7) is slightly in favour of the second of the two senses.

12. *all his servants are wicked*] They know what will please, and they become informers and backbiters.

13. Better, The poor and the oppressor. "Usurer," as in the marg. expresses the special form of oppression from which the poor suffer most at the hands of the rich.

- 14 ^o The king that ^p faithfully judgeth the poor,
His throne shall be established for ever.
- 15 ^a The rod and reproof give wisdom :
But ^r a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.
- 16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth :
^a But the righteous shall see their fall.
- 17 ^c Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest ;
Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.
- 18 ^u Where *there is* no vision, the people ^l perish :
But ^x he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.
- 19 A servant will not be corrected by words :
For though he understand he will not answer.
- 20 Seest thou a man *that is* hasty ² in his words ?
^v *There is* more hope of a fool than of him.
- 21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child
Shall have him become *his* son at the length.
- 22 ^z An angry man stirreth up strife,
And a furious man aboundeth in transgression.
- 23 ^a A man's pride shall bring him low :
But honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.
- 24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul :
^b He heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.
- 25 ^c The fear of man bringeth a snare :
But whoso putteth his trust in the LORD ³ shall be safe.
- 26 ^d Many seek ⁴ the ruler's favour ;
But *every* man's judgment cometh from the LORD.
- ¹ Or, *is made naked.* ² Or, *in his matters ?* ⁴ Heb. *the face of a ruler.*
³ Heb. *shall be set on high.*

^o ch. 20. 28.
^a 25. 5.
^p Ps. 72. 2, 4,
13, 14.
^r ver. 17.
^c ch. 10. 1.
& 17. 21, 25.
^u Ps. 37. 36.
& 58. 10.
^x ch. 13. 24.
& 19. 18.
^v 1 Sam. 3. 1.
Amos 8. 11,
12.
^z John 13. 17.
Jam. 1. 25.
^v ch. 26. 12.
^a ch. 15. 18.
& 26. 21.
^a Job 22. 29.
ch. 15. 33.
Isai. 66. 2.
Dan. 4. 30.
Matt. 23. 12.
Luke 14. 11.
Acts 12. 23.
Jam. 4. 6.
¹ 1 Pet. 5. 5.
^b Lev. 5. 1.
^c Gen. 12. 12.
& 20. 2, 11.
^d See Ps.
20. 9.
ch. 19. 6.

God has made them both and bestows His light equally on both.

15. *left to himself*] The condition of one who has been pampered and indulged. The mother who yields weakly is as guilty of abandoning the child she spoils, as if she cast him forth; and for her evil neglect, there shall fall upon her the righteous punishment of shame and ignominy.

18. *vision*] The word commonly used of the revelation of God's will made to prophets. Cp. Isai. i. 1; Nah. i. 1.

When prophetic vision fails, obedience to the Law is the best or only substitute for it, both being forms through which Divine wisdom is revealed. Very striking in the midst of ethical precepts is this recognition of the need of a yet higher teaching, without which morality passes into worldly prudence or degenerates into casuistry. The "wise man," the son of David, has seen in the prophets and in their work the condition of true national blessedness. The darkest time in the history of Israel had been when there "was no open vision (1 Sam. iii. 1); at such a time the people "perish," are let loose, "are left to run wild."

19. *servant*] i.e. A slave, whose obedience

is reluctant. He may "understand" the words, but they produce no good effect. There is still lacking the true "answer" of obedience.

21. *son*] The Hebrew word occurs here only and is therefore of doubtful meaning. The favoured slave, petted and pampered from boyhood, will claim at last the privilege, perhaps the inheritance, of sonship.

23. *honour shall uphold the humble in spirit*] Better, the lowly in spirit shall lay hold on honour.

24. On the first discovery of the theft, the person wronged (Judg. xvii. 2), or the judge of the city (marg. ref.), pronounced a solemn curse on the thief and on all who, knowing the offender, were unwilling to give evidence against him. The accomplice of the thief hears that curse, and yet is silent, and so falls under it, and "destroys his own soul."

25. The confusion and wretchedness in which the fear of what men can do entangles us, is contrasted with the security of one, who not only "fears" the Lord, so as to avoid offending Him, but trusts in Him as his protector and guide.

26. To trust in the favour of princes is to

27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to the just;
And *he that is* upright in the way *is* abomination to the wicked.

^a ch. 31. 1.

CHAP. 30. THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *even* ^athe prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

^b Ps. 73. 22.

2 ^bSurely I *am* more brutish than *any* man,
And have not the understanding of a man.

3 I neither learned wisdom,
Nor ¹have the knowledge of the holy.

^c John 3. 13.

4 ^cWho hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?

^d Job 38. 4.

^dWho hath gathered the wind in his fists?

Ps. 104. 3.

Who hath bound the waters in a garment?

Isai. 40. 12,

Who hath established all the ends of the earth?

&c.

What *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou ¹canst tell?

^e Ps. 12. 6.

5 ^eEvery word of God *is* ²pure:

& 18. 30.

^fHe *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

& 19. 8.

6 ^gAdd thou not unto his words,

^f Ps. 18. 30.

Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

& 115. 9.

10. 11.

7 Two *things* have I required of thee;

^g Deut. 4. 2.

³Deny me *them* not before I die:

& 12. 32.

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies:

Rev. 22. 18,

Give me neither poverty nor riches;

19.

^h Matt. 6. 11.

⁴Feed me with food ⁴convenient for me:

¹ Heb. *know*.

² Heb. *purified*.

³ Heb. *withhold not from me*.

⁴ Heb. *of thy allowance*.

build upon the sands. The judgment which will set right all wrong will come from the Lord. It is better to wait for that than to run hither and thither, canvassing, bribing, flattering.

27. The words point out not only the antagonism between the doers of good and evil, but the instinctive antipathy which the one feels towards the other.

XXX. 1. See the Introduction, p. 342. According to the different reading, there noted, the inscription ends with, "the man spake," and the words that follow, are the beginning of the confession, "I have wearied myself after God and have fainted."

spake] The Hebrew word is that commonly used of the utterance of a Divine oracle.

2. A confession of ignorance, with which cp. the saying of Socrates that he was wise only so far as he knew that he knew nothing, or that of Asaph (Ps. lxxiii. 22).

3. He found, when he looked within, that all his learning was as nothing. He had heard of God only "by the hearing of the ear" (Job xlii. 5), and now he discovered how little that availed.

the holy] The Holy One. Cp. ix. 10.

4. Man is to be humbled to the dust by the thought of the glory of God as seen in the visible creation.

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended!] The thought is obviously that of

the all-embracing Providence of God, taking in at once the greatest and the least, the highest and the lowest. The mysteries of the winds and of the waters baffle men's searches.

what is his son's name] The primary thought is that man knows so little of the Divine nature that he cannot tell whether he may transfer to it the human relationships with which he is familiar, or must rest in the thought of a unity indivisible and incommunicable. If there be such an Only-begotten of the Father (cp. viii. 30), His nature, until revealed, must be as incomprehensible by us as that of the Father Himself.

5. Out of this consciousness of the impotence of all man's efforts after the knowledge of God rises the sense of the preciousness of every living word that God has Himself revealed, whether through "the Law and the Prophets" or through "wise men and scribes."

6. Men are not to mingle revealed truth with their own imaginations and traditions. In speculating on the unseen, the risk of error is indefinitely great, and that error God reproves by manifesting its falsehoods.

7. *Two things*] The limitation of man's desires follows naturally upon his consciousness of the limits of his knowledge.

8. The order of the two requests is significant. The wise man's prayer is first and

- 9 ¹ Lest I be full, and ¹ deny thee,—and say, Who is the LORD?
 • Or lest I be poor, and steal,
 And take the name of my God in vain.
- 10 ² Accuse not a servant unto his master,
 Lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.
- 11 There is a generation that curseth their father,
 And doth not bless their mother.
- 12 There is a generation ³ that are pure in their own eyes,
 And yet is not washed from their filthiness.
- 13 There is a generation, O how ¹ lofty are their eyes!
 And their eyelids are lifted up.
- 14 ^m There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords,
 And their jaw teeth as knives,
ⁿ To devour the poor from off the earth,
 And the needy from among men.
- 15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give.
 There are three things that are never satisfied,
 Yea, four things say not, ³ It is enough:
- 16 ^o The grave; and the barren womb;
 The earth that is not filled with water;
 And the fire that saith not, It is enough.
- 17 ^p The eye that mocketh at his father,
 And despiseth to obey his mother,
 The ravens of ⁴ the valley shall pick it out,
 And the young eagles shall eat it.
- 18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
 Yea, four which I know not:

¹ Deut. 8. 12,
 14. 17.
 Neh. 9. 25.
 Job 31. 24.
 Hos. 13. 6.

² Luke 18.
 11.

¹ Ps. 131. 1.
 ch. 6. 17.

^m Job 29. 17.
 Ps. 52. 2.
 ch. 12. 18.
ⁿ Ps. 14. 4.
 Amos 8. 4.

^o ch. 27. 20.
 Hab. 2. 5.

^p Gen. 9. 22.
 Lev. 20. 9.
 ch. 20. 20.
 & 23. 22.

¹ Heb. *belie* thee.

² Heb. *Hurt not with thy tongue.*

³ Heb. *wealth.*
⁴ Or, *the brook.*

chiefly, "truth in the inward parts," the removal of all forms of falsehood, hollow-ness, hypocrisy.

neither poverty &c.] The evil of the opposite extremes of social life is that in different ways they lead men to a false standard of duty, and so to that forgetfulness of God which passes into an absolute denial.

food convenient for me] Lit. "give me for food the bread of my appointed portion." The prayer foreshadows that which we have been taught by the Divine Wisdom, "Give us, day by day, our daily bread."

9. The special dangers of the two extremes. Wealth tempts to pride, unbelief, and a scorn like that of Pharaoh (Exod. v. 2); poverty to dishonesty, and then to perjury, or to the hypocritical profession of religion which is practically identical with it.

10. *Accuse not a servant*] The prayer in v. 8 does not shut out sympathy with those who are less favoured. Even the slave has a right to protection against frivolous or needless accusation. • Others, however, render the words *Make not a slave to accuse his master*, i.e. Do not make him discontented with his lot, lest he afterwards

curse thee for having made it worse than it was.

11. As the teacher had uttered what he most desired, so now he tells what he most abhorred; and in true harmony with the teaching of the Ten Commandments places in the foremost rank those who rise against the Fifth.

12. The Pharisee temper (cp. marg. ref.). 15, 16. Note the numeration mounting to a climax, the two, the three, the four (Amos i. 3 &c.). The word rendered "horseleach" is found nowhere else, and its etymology is doubtful; but there are good grounds for taking the word in its literal sense, as giving an example, in the natural world, of the insatiable greed of which the next verse gives other instances. Its voracious appetite is here represented, to express its intensity, as two daughters, uttering the same ceaseless cry for more.

16. *The grave*] Heb. *Sheol*. The "Hell" or Hades of xxvii. 20, all-consuming yet never full.

• 18-20. Another enigma. The four things of v. 16 agreed in the common point of insatiableness; the four now mentioned

19 The way of an eagle in the air;—the way of a serpent upon a rock;

The way of a ship in the ¹midst of the sea;
And the way of a man with a maid.

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman;
She eateth, and wipeth her mouth,
And saith, I have done no wickedness.

21 For three *things* the earth is disquieted,
And for four *which* it cannot bear:

7 ch. 19. 10.
Eccl. 10. 7.

22 ^a For a servant when he reigneth;
And a fool when he is filled with meat;

23 For an odious *woman* when she is married;
And an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

24 There be four *things which* are little upon the earth,
But they are ²exceeding wise:

7 ch. 6. 6, &c.

25 ^r The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

7 Ps. 104. 18.

26 ^a The conies *are but* a feeble folk,
Yet make they their houses in the rocks;

27 The locusts have no king,
Yet go they forth all of them ³by bands;

28 The spider taketh hold with her hands,
And is in kings' palaces.

29 There be three *things* which go well,
Yea, four are comely in going:

30 A lion *which is* strongest among beasts,
And turneth not away for any;

31 A ⁴greyhound; an he goat also;
And a king, against whom *there is* no rising up.

¹ Heb. *heart*.

² Heb. *wise, made wise*.

³ Heb. *gathered together*.

⁴ Or, *horse*.

⁵ Heb. *girt in the loins*.

agree in this, that they leave no trace behind them.

19. *the way of a man with a maid*] The act of sin leaves no outward mark upon the sinners.

21. *for four which it cannot bear*] Better, *four it cannot bear*. Here the common element is that of being intolerable, and the four examples are divided equally between the two sexes. Each has its examples of power and prosperity misused because they fall to the lot of those who have no training for them, and are therefore in the wrong place.

23. *odious woman*] One in whom there is nothing loveable. Marriage, which to most women is the state in which they find scope for their highest qualities, becomes to her only a sphere in which to make herself and others miserable.

24. *exceeding wise*] Some prefer the reading of the LXX. and Vulg., "wiser than the wise." The thought, in either case, turns upon the marvels of instinct, which, in their own province, transcend the more elaborate results of human wisdom.

25. See marg. ref. note. Note the word "people" applied here to ants, as to locusts

in Joel i. 6. The marvel lies in their collective, and, as it were, organized action.

26. *conies*] See marg. ref. note.

27. Cp. Joel ii. 7, 8; the most striking fact in the flight of the locust-swarms was their apparent order and discipline, sweeping over the land like the invasion of a great army.

28. *spider*] Rather, the Gecko (or Stello), a genus of the lizard tribe, many species of which haunt houses, make their way through crevices in the walls, and with feet that secrete a venomous exudation catch the spiders or the flies they find there.

31. *A greyhound*] The Heb. word occurs nowhere else in the O.T. The literal meaning is, "one with loins girded;" and some have referred this to the stripes of the zebra, others to the "war-horse" (cp. Job xxxix. 19, 25), as he is represented in the sculptures of Persepolis, with rich and stately trappings.

a king, against whom there is no rising up] i.e. A king irresistible. Others prefer, "a king in the midst of his people," and the sense, as giving a more vivid picture, is certainly more satisfactory.

- 32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself,
 *Or if thou hast thought evil,—^clay thine hand upon thy mouth. ^a Job 21. 5.
 33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, ^a & 40. 4.
 And the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood : ^a Eccl. 8. 3.
 So the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife. ^a Mic. 7. 16.

- CHAP. 31. THE words of king Lemuel, ^athe prophecy that his mother taught him. ^a ch. 30. 1.
- 2 What, my son ? and what, ^bthe son of my womb ? ^b Isai. 40. 15.
 And what, the son of my vows ? ^c ch. 5. 9.
- 3 ^cGive not thy strength unto women,
 Nor thy ways ^dto that which destroyeth kings. ^c Deut. 17. 17.
- 4 ^eIt is not for kings, O Lemuel, ^eit is not for kings to drink wine ;
 Nor for princes strong drink : ^f Neh. 13. 20.
 5 ^fLest they drink, and forget the law,
 And ^gpervert the judgment ^gof any of the afflicted. ^f ch. 7. 26.
 6 ^gGive strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,
 And wine unto those that be ^hof heavy hearts. ^g Eccl. 10. 17.
 7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty,
 And remember his misery no more. ^h Hos. 4. 11.
- 8 ⁱOpen thy mouth for the dumb
ⁱIn the cause of all ^jsuch as are appointed to destruction. ⁱ Ps. 104. 15.
- 9 Open thy mouth, ^kjudge righteously,
 And ^lplead the cause of the poor and needy.
- 10 (N) ^mWho can find a virtuous woman ?
 For her price is far above rubies.
- 11 (Z) The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,
 So that he shall have no need of spoil.

¹ Heb. alter. ³ Heb. bitter of soul, 1 ⁴ Heb. the sons of destruction.
² Heb. of all the sons of affliction. Sam. 1. 10.

32. *lay thine hand upon thy mouth*] The act expresses the silence of humiliation and repentance after the sin has been committed, and that of self-restraint, which checks the haughty or malignant thought before it has passed even into words.

33. *churning...wringing...forcing*] In the Heb. one and the same word. "The pressure of milk produces curds, the pressure of the nose produces blood, the pressure of wrath (i.e. brooding over and, as it were, condensing it) produces strife."

XXXI. See Introduction, p. 343.

1. *that his mother taught him*] Cp. i. 8, vi. 20. If we refer the chapter to Israelite authorship, we may remember the honour paid to the wisdom of Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah; if to Edomite or Arabian, we may think of the Queen of Sheba, whose love of wisdom led her to sit at the feet of the son of David.

2. The repetitions are emphatic; expressive of anxious love.

son of my vows] Like Samuel, and Samson, the child often asked for in prayer, the prayer ratified by a vow of dedication. The name Lemuel (lit. "for God," consecrated to Him) may be the expression of that dedication; and the warning against indulging in wine (v. 4) shews that it had some-

thing of the Nazarite or Rechabite idea in it.

3. *to that which destroyeth*] The temptations of the harem were then, as now, the curse of all Eastern kingdoms.

4. Some read, "nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?" The "strong drink" (xx. 1) was distilled from barley, or honey, or dates.

6. The true purpose of the power of wine over man's mind and body, as a restorative and remedial agent. Cp. marg. ref. The same thought shewed itself in the Jewish practice of giving a cup of wine to mourners, and (as in the history of the Crucifixion) to criminals at their execution.

8. In contrast with the two besetting sins of Eastern monarchs stands their one great duty, to give help to those who had no other helper.

such as are appointed to destruction] Lit. "children of bereavement," with the sense, either, as in the text, of those "destined to be bereaved of life or goods," or of "bereaved or fatherless children."

10. See Introduction, p. 344.
rubies] Better pearls. See iii. 15 note.

11. *no need of spoil*] Better, no lack of gain, lack of honest gain.

- 12 (2) She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
 13 (7) She seeketh wool, and flax,
 And worketh willingly with her hands.
 14 (7) She is like the merchants' ships;
 She bringeth her food from afar.
 15 (7) ^aShe riseth also while it is yet night,
 And ^o giveth meat to her household,
 And a portion to her maidens.
 16 (7) She considereth a field, and ¹buyeth it:
 With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
 17 (7) She girdeth her loins with strength,
 And strengtheneth her arms.
 18 (2) ²She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good:
 Her candle goeth not out by night.
 19 (7) She layeth her hands to the spindle,
 And her hands hold the distaff.
 20 (2) ³She stretcheth out her hand to the poor;
 Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
 21 (7) She is not afraid of the snow for her household:
 For all her household *are* clothed with ⁴scarlet.
 22 (2) She maketh herself coverings of tapestry;
 Her clothing *is* silk and purple.
 23 (5) ^aHer husband is known in the gates,
 When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
 24 (7) She maketh fine linen, and selleth it;
 And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
 25 (7) Strength and honour *are* her clothing;
 And she shall rejoice in time to come.
 26 (2) She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
 And in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
 27 (5) She looketh well to the ways of her household,
 And eateth not the bread of idleness.
 28 (7) Her children arise up, and call her blessed;
 Her husband *also*, and he praiseth her

¹ Heb. *taketh*.² Heb. *She tasteth*.³ Heb. *She spreadeth*.⁴ Or, *double garments*.

13. *worketh willingly with her hands*] Or, **Worketh with willing hands**. The stress laid on the industrial habits of Israelite matrons may perhaps belong to a time when, as under the monarchy of Judah, those habits were passing away.

14. The comparison points to the enlarged commerce of the Israelites consequent on their intercourse with the Phœnicians under David and Solomon; cp. v. 24.

15. *a portion to her maidens*] The daily task assigned to each at the same time as the daily food. Cp. xxx. 8; Ex. v. 14.

16. The verse points to a large sphere of feminine activity, strikingly in contrast with the degradation to which woman in the East has now fallen.

20. The industry is not selfish, but bears the fruit of an open-handed charity.

21. *scarlet*] Probably some well-known articles of dress, at once conspicuous for their colour, or, as some think, for their double texture and warmth.

22. *silk*] Better, **fine linen**, the *byssus* of Egypt.

23. The industry of the wife leaves the husband free to take his place among the elders that sit in councils.

24. *fine linen*] Not the same word as in v. 22 note; it describes a made-up garment (Isai. iii. 23).

merchant] Lit. "Canaanite," i.e. the Phœnician merchant.

25. *shall rejoice in time to come*] Better, **rejoiceth over the time to come**; i.e. looks forward to the future, not with anxious care, but with confident gladness.

26. *law of kindness*] The words which come from the lips of the true wife are as a law giving guidance and instruction to those that hear them; but the law is not proclaimed in its sterner aspects, but as one in which "mercy tempers justice," and love, the fulfilling of the law, is seen to be the source from which it springs.

- 29 (7) Many daughters have done virtuously,
 • But thou excellest them all.
 30 (12) Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain :
 But a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
 31 (17) Give her of the fruit of her hands ;
 And let her own works praise her in the gates.

1 Or, have gotten riches.

29. The words of praise which the husband (v. 28) is supposed to have addressed to the ideal wife. In other passages (e.g. Gen. xxxiv. 29; Pa. xlix. 10) it has the sense of "riches," and is so taken here by the LXX. and Vulg., see also the marg. rendering.

virtuously] The Hebrew word has primarily (like "virtus") the idea of "strength," but is used with various shades of meaning. Here (as in xii. 4; Ruth iii. 11) the strength is that of character stedfast in goodness.

30. The last lesson of the Book is the same as the first. The fear of the Lord is the condition of all womanly, as well as of all manly, excellence.



ECCLESIASTES.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Book is placed, in the most ancient Jewish and Christian lists, between the other two Books (Proverbs and the Song of Songs) attributed to Solomon, and the constant tradition of the Jewish and Christian Churches has handed down Solomon without question as the author.

Some modern critics have indeed alleged that Solomon could not have written it, (*a*) because the language is such as no Jew in his age could have used, (*b*) because the language differs from that of Proverbs and the Song of Songs, and (*c*) because the historical allusions in the Book do not agree with the period and the circumstances of Solomon.

(*a*) In answer to this, it would appear that every word quoted from Ecclesiastes as impossible to be used before the Captivity has been shewn either (1) to be used in Books written, as is generally believed, before the Captivity; or (2) to be formed from words, and by a grammatical process, in use before the Captivity; or (3) to be represented in such Books by a derivative; or (4) to be undoubtedly common to other Semitic dialects besides Chaldee, and therefore, presumably, to Hebrew before the Captivity, although not found in extant writings of earlier date than Ecclesiastes. The allegation, therefore, that the language of this Book shews distinct traces of the Chaldean invasion, of the Babylonian Captivity, or of any later event which

affected the Hebrew tongue, may be considered sufficiently answered.¹

(*b*) The dissimilarity in style and diction between this Book and Proverbs or the Song of Songs is admitted; but it has been accounted for to some extent, first, by the difference of subject. Abstract ideas may be expressed up to a certain point by words which originally denoted something else: but philosophic thought such as distinguishes this Book from the other two, gradually forms its own terminology. Next, it is argued, that there was an interval of many years between the composition of the two former Books and of this; and that in that time there was a natural change in the temperament, views, and style of the writer; a change which may be traced partly to Solomon's familiarity with foreign women sprung from various Semitic races, partly also to his extensive negotiations and personal intercourse with the representatives of other nations, some of whom were

¹ Writers who maintain that the language of Ecclesiastes could not have been used by a Jew in Solomon's age, diverge so widely from one another on the question of date as to suggest a serious doubt whether such grammatical knowledge of Hebrew as is now attainable ought to be allowed all the weight that is claimed for it in deciding the date of the composition of this Book. If the majority place it between the 4th and 6th centuries B.C., some place it as high as the 10th and some as low as the 1st.

not of Semitic origin (1 K. x. 22).² Lastly, to balance the differences, it is to be noted that there are some characteristic resemblances between these Books. It is reasonable to regard these as an indication of a common origin.

(c) It is alleged that the particular mention of Jerusalem (i. 1, 12) as the seat of Solomon's reign, implies that the Book was written at a time when there was more than one seat of kingly authority in Israel, *i.e.* after the separation of the ten tribes and the erection of another capital, Samaria. The answer is that there is an obvious fitness in the specific mention of Jerusalem previous to the account of Solomon's labours in chs. i, ii, for it was the scene of his peculiar work for many years, and the place which he had made the chief monument of his grandeur.

It is alleged that the expression, "I was king" (i. 12), implies that at the time when these words were written Solomon was no longer king, and that consequently the passage must have been written by some one personating him after his death. But, in Hebrew the preterite is used with strict grammatical propriety in describing a past

which extends into the present. Solomon is as a speaker who views the action or state expressed by the verb as then first about coming to pass, in progress, or perhaps occurring at the instant. The phrase therefore would be both grammatically correct if used by Solomon before the close of his reign, and a natural expression of his feelings in his old age.

It is argued that such a state of violence, popular oppression and despotic rule, as that which is instanced in iv. 1 did not exist in Palestine in the peaceful reign of Solomon. This allegation has no foundation in fact. The significant statements of historians (*e.g.* 1 K. xii. 4 and 2 Chr. ii. 17, 18, viii. 7-9) and the numerous unmistakeable allusions in the Book of Proverbs (*e.g.* i. 10-13, vi. 16-19, xi. 26, xiv. 20, xxii. 22, 23, xxiv. 21, xxv. 5, xxviii. 2, 16) agree with the descriptions in Ecclesiastes in shewing that the kingdom of Israel, even in its most prosperous days, afforded grievous instances of the common evils of Asiatic despotism.³

It is stated that such passages as xii. 7, 14 shew a knowledge of revealed truth beyond what was given prior to the Captivity.⁴ But

² The history of literature supplies many instances of the same writer expressing his thoughts in different styles. Cp. the difference between the speeches and the narrative of the Greek historian Thucydides; and cp. the difference in the dialect, diction, and metre of the chorus with the dialogue of Greek tragedy. The style of Milton in his "Ode on the Nativity," written in his 21st year, differs widely from "Samson Agonistes," a product of his old age. Holy Scripture itself supplies a striking instance of the same kind; the Revelation of St. John presents some remarkable differences of style and language if compared with the Gospel and Epistles; yet this dissimilarity

does not prevent critics, after taking all the facts into account, from considering the whole of these Books as the work of the same author.

³ It has also been argued that Solomon, as the supreme ruler of the people, and therefore responsible for the oppression, would not have placed on record a description of it. But, even supposing that Solomon's own subjects are here referred to by him; yet all sovereigns, intimately acquainted with the condition of their people, are aware of and must deplore the infliction of much misery which they are unable to prevent or to avenge.

⁴ See Introduction to the Psalms, p. 100.

if the exact words of Ecclesiastes be compared with the obscure intimations given by Moses on the one hand, and with the later utterances of Daniel on the other, this Book appears to hold a middle place. It tallies very closely with some of the Psalms which were probably written about the age of Solomon.⁵ After all, does not the argument above mentioned proceed on an assumption that we are more competent than we really are to find out the ways of the Author of Revelation? Are we qualified to decide positively that so much as is recorded on those subjects in Ecclesiastes came out of its proper season if it was given to Solomon?

On the whole, therefore, it seems the most reasonable course to accept as a simple statement of fact the words with which Ecclesiastes begins; and, in accordance with the voice of the Church from the beginning, to regard Solomon as the author of this Book.

II. What was the object of the writer in composing this Book?

The method of Greek philosophy and its principles, Epicurean, Stoic, and Cynic, have been attributed to the author of Ecclesiastes; but on no better ground than might be found in the writings of any thoughtful and sensitive man who has felt, contemplated, and described the perplexities of human life.

The author was evidently a man of profound faith in God, of large and varied personal experience, of acute observation of men and things, and of deep sensibility.

Probably he was first moved to write by a mind painfully full of the disappointing nature of all things viewed apart from God: next by deep sympathy with fellow-men touched by the same natural feelings as himself, and suffering like him, though each in their several ways; and thirdly, by the evident desire to lead other men, and specially young men, out of the temptations which he had felt, and out of the perplexities which once entangled and staggered him. Whether his heart was chilled by old age or by the cold shadow of some former eclipse of faith can only be conjectured; but there is in Ecclesiastes an absence of that fervour of zeal for the glory of God which glows in other Books, and which we are justified in regarding as a feature of Solomon's character in his early days. His immediate object would seem then to be to relieve his mind by pouring out the results of his own life, to comfort those who bore the same burden of humanity, and to lift up those who were naturally feeble or depressed by circumstances and to lead them in the way of God's commandments.

As regards plan, the writer of the Book evidently regarded it as complete in itself; the first part of the Book being contemplative or doctrinal, and the latter part practical.

First, there is the writer's statement of his subject, and his detailed account of his personal experience of the influence of vanity pervading human proceedings (chs. i. ii.). Then, there is the announcement of an external law to which also human affairs are subject, i.e. the will of God, Whose plan, incom-

⁵ e.g. with regard to the judgment of the world, Psa. i. 5, ix. 8, xvi. 13, and with regard to the souls of the dead being with God, Ps. xvi. 8-11.

prehensible in its extent, is found by all to be more or less in conflict with man's will (chs. iii. iv.), the result of such conflict being disappointment and perplexity to man. Then there is the commencement (ch. v.) of personal practical advice, followed by a mixture of reflections, maxims, and exhortations, in which the vanity of riches, the practical superiority of wisdom and patience, and the supreme power of God, are the prominent topics set forth in various ways (chs. vi., vii., viii.). In ch. ix. the writer's reflections, in ch. x. his maxims, are brought to an end; and in chs. xi. and xii. we have a concluding exhortation to such conduct and sentiments as are most likely to alleviate the vanity of this life, viz. to charity, industry, patience and the fear of God.

If the Book was composed, as seems probable, towards the end of Solomon's reign, its direct tendency is obvious. In an age when "silver was as stones in Jerusalem" no lesson was more necessary, and none would tell with deeper effect, than those powerful and touching declarations of the vanity of wealth and grandeur which are perhaps the most conspicuous feature in this Book. Further, if the Book appealed then, as it has ever since appealed, to an inner circle of more thoughtful readers, they especially who in those

days discerned the signs of the approaching dismemberment of the kingdom and the diminution of the glory of Jerusalem would find their comfort in its lessons of patient endurance and resignation to the sovereign will of God. Whenever the Church has been threatened with approaching calamity this Book has always shewn its consolatory effect upon devout believers.⁶ It served, before Christ came, to lighten for Jews the darkness of those "crooked" ways of God which have exercised the Christian penetration of Pascal and Butler. To the desolation of religious doubt, Ecclesiastes brings a special message of consolation and direction: for it shews that a cry of perplexity finds a place even in the sacred Books; and it indicates a nearer approach to the living God in reverent worship (v. 1), in active service (xi. 6), in humble acknowledgment of His power (iii. 10-17), in reliance on His final justice (v. 8, xii. 13, 14), as the means by which that cry has been, and may again be, hushed.

⁶ Augustine refers to it as setting forth the vanity of this life, only that we may desire that life wherein, instead of vanity beneath the sun, there is truth under Him Who made the sun. It was the same tendency which induced the author of the "De Imitatione Christi" to borrow from Ecclesiastes the key-note of his golden book.

ECCLESIASTES;

OR,

THE PREACHER.

CHAP. 1. THE words "of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

- 2 ^b Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities ;
- 3 ^a all is vanity. ^d What profit hath a man of all his labour which
- 4 he taketh under the sun ? ^e One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh : ^f but the earth abideth for ever.
- 5 ^f The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and ^g hasteth to

^a ver. 12.
^{ch.} 7. 27.
[&] 12. 8, 9, 10.
^b Ps. 39. 5, 6.
[&] 62. 9.
^c 144. 4.
^{ch.} 12. 8.
^d Rom. 8. 20.
^e ch. 2. 22.
[&] 3. 9.
^f Ps. 104. 5.
[&] 119. 90.
^g Ps. 19. 5, 6.

¹ Heb. *panteth*.

I. 1-3. These introductory verses serve to describe the writer, and to state the subject of his Book.

1. *Preacher*] Lit. *Convener*. No one English word represents adequately the Heb. *Kohleth*. Though capable, according to Hebrew usage, of being applied to men in office, it is strictly a feminine participle, and describes a person in the act of calling together an assembly of people as if with the intention of addressing them. The word thus understood refers us to the action of Wisdom personified (Prov. i. 20, viii. 8). In Prov. and here Solomon seems to support two characters, speaking sometimes in the third person as Wisdom instructing the assembled people, at other times in the first person. So our Lord speaks of Himself (cp. Luke xi. 49 with Matt. xxiii. 34) as Wisdom, and as desiring (Luke xiii. 34) to gather the people together for instruction. It is unfortunate that the word "Preacher" does not bring this personification before English minds, but a different idea.

2. *Vanity*] This word (*Hebel*, or, when used as a proper name, in Gen. iv. 2, *Abel*), occurs no less than 37 times in Ecclesiastes, and has been called the key of the Book. Primarily it means "breath," "light wind;" and denotes that which (1) passes away more or less quickly and completely, (2) leaves either no result or no adequate result behind, and therefore (3) fails to satisfy the mind of man, which naturally craves for something permanent and progressive: it is also applied to (4) idols, as contrasted with the Living, Eternal, and Almighty God, and thus in the Hebrew mind it is connected with sin. In this Book it is applied to all works on earth, to pleasure, grandeur, wisdom, the life of man, childhood, youth, and length of days, the oblivion of the grave, wandering and unsatisfied desires, unenjoyed possessions, and anomalies in the moral government of the world.

Solomon speaks of the world-wide existence of "vanity," not with bitterness or

scorn, but as a fact, which forced itself on him as he advanced in knowledge of men and things, and which he regards with sorrow and perplexity. From such feelings he finds refuge by contrasting this with another fact, which he holds with equal firmness, viz. that the whole universe is made and is governed by a God of justice, goodness, and power. The place of vanity in the order of Divine Providence—unknown to Solomon, unless the answer be indicated in vii. 29—is explained to us by St. Paul, Romans viii., where its origin is traced to the subjugation and corruption of creation by sin as a consequence of the fall of man; and its extinction is declared to be reserved till after the Resurrection in the glory and liberty of the children of God.

Vanity of vanities] A well-known Hebrew idiom signifying vanity in the highest degree. Cp. the phrase, "Holy of Holies."

all] Solomon includes both the courses of nature and the works of man (rv. 4-11). Cp. Rom. viii. 22.

3. *What profit* &c.] The question often repeated is the great practical inquiry of the Book; it receives its final answer in xii. 13, 14. When this question was asked the Lord had not yet spoken (Matt. xi. 28). The word "profit" (or preeminence) is opposed to "vanity."

hath a man] Rather, *hath man*.

4-11. "Vanity" is shown in mankind, the elements, and all that moves on earth; the same course is repeated again and again without any permanent result or real progress; and events and men are alike forgotten.

4. *abideth*] The apparent permanence of the earth increases by contrast the transitory condition of its inhabitants.

ever] The word does not here absolutely signify "eternity" (cp. iii. 11 note), but a certainly short period (cp. Ex. xxi. 6): here it might be paraphrased "as long as this world, this present order of things, lasts."

5. *hasteth* &c.] Lit. *at his place panting* (in his eagerness) *riseth he there*.

- ^v John 3. 8. 6 his place where he arose. ^vThe wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.
- ^a Job 38. 10. 7 ^aAll the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they ¹return
- ⁱ Prov. 27. 20. 8 again. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.
- ^a ch. 3. 15. 9 ^aThe thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was
- 10 before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.
- ⁱ ver. 1. 12, 13 ⁱI the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: ^mthis sore travail hath God given to the sons of man ²to be exercised therewith.
- ^m Gen. 3. 19. ch. 3. 10. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, be-

¹ Heb. return to go.² Or, to afflict them.

6. More lit. **Going towards the south and veering towards the north, veering, veering goes the wind; and to its veerings the wind returns.**

7. *the place* i.e. The spring or river-head. It would seem that the ancient Hebrews regarded the clouds as the immediate feeders of the springs (Prov. viii. 28, and Ps. civ. 10, 13). Gen. ii. 6 indicates some acquaintance with the process and result of evaporation.

8. *All things...utter it*] This clause, as here translated, refers to the immensity of labour. Others translate it, "all words are full of labour; they make weary the hearers," or "are feeble or insufficient" to tell the whole; and are referred to the impossibility of adequately describing labour.

9. *hath been...is done*] i.e. Hath happened in the course of nature...is done by man.

11. *things*] Rather, men.

12. Solomon relates his personal experience (ch. ii.); the result of which was "no profit," and a conviction that all, even God's gifts of earthly good to good men, in this life are subject to vanity. His trial of God's first gift, wisdom, is recounted in *vv.* 12-18.

was] This tense does not imply that Solomon had ceased to be king when the word was written. See Introduction, p. 424. He begins with the time of his accession to the throne, when the gifts of wisdom and riches were specially promised to him (1 K. iii. 12, 13).

13. *wisdom*] As including both the powers of observation and judgment, and the knowledge acquired thereby (1 K. iii. 28, iv. 29, x. 8 &c.). It increases by exercise. Here is noted its application to men and their actions.

travail] In the sense of toil; the word is here applied to all human occupations.

God] Thirty-nine times in this Book, God is named as Elohim; a name common to the true God and to false gods, and used by believers and by idolators: but the name Jehovah, by which He is known peculiarly to the people who are in Covenant with Him, is never once used.

Perhaps the chief reason for this is that the evil which is the object of inquiry in this Book is not at all peculiar to the chosen people. All creation (Rom. viii.) groans under it. The Preacher does not write of, or to, the Hebrew race exclusively. There is no express and obvious reference to their national expectations, the events of their national history, or even to the divine oracles which were deposited with them. Hence it was natural for the wisest and largest-hearted man of his race to take a wider range of observation than any other Hebrew writer before or after him. It became the sovereign of many peoples whose religions diverged more or less remotely from the true religion, to address himself to a more extensive sphere than that which was occupied by the twelve tribes, and to adapt his language accordingly. See v. 1 note.

14. *vexation of spirit*] A phrase which occurs 7 times, and may be otherwise translated, **feeding on wind**. Modern Heb. grammarians assert that the word rendered "vexation" must be derived from a root signifying "to feed," "follow," "strive after." This being admitted, it remains to choose between two translations: (1) "Striving after wind," or "windy effort;" adopted by the LXX. and the majority of modern interpreters; or (2) **feeding on wind**. Cp. Hos. xii. 1: and similar phrases in Prov. xv. 14; Isai. xlv. 20; Ps. xxxvii. 3.

15 hold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit. *"That which is crooked* ^{* ch. 7. 13.}
 cannot be made straight: and *'that which is wanting cannot be*
 16 numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am
 come to great estate, and have gotten *'more wisdom than all*
they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart ^{o 1 K. 3. 12,} had
 17 great experience of wisdom and knowledge. *'And I gave my*
heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I per-
 18 ceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For *'in much wisdom*
is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth
 sorrow.

CHAP. 2. *^a I SAID in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with*
*mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, ^bthis also *is* va-*
2 nity. ^cI said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?
 3 *^dI sought in mine heart ^eto give myself unto wine, yet acquaint-*
ing mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I
 4 *might see what *was* that good for the sons of men, which they*
 5 *should do under the heaven ^fall the days of their life. I made*
me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:
 6 *I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them*
 7 *of all *kind of* fruits: I made me pools of water, to water there-*
 with the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got *me* servants and
 maidens, and had *'servants born in my house; also I had great*
 possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jeru-

¹ Heb. defect.

² Heb. had seen much.

³ Heb. to draw my flesh with wine.

⁴ Heb. the number of the days of their life.

⁵ Heb. sons of my house.

15. He saw clearly both the disorder and incompleteness of human actions (cp. marg. ref.), and also man's impotence to rectify them.

16. *I am come &c.*] Rather, I have accumulated (lit. "enlarged and added") wisdom more than &c.

they that have been &c.] The reference is probably to the line of Canaanitish kings who lived in Jerusalem before David took it, such as Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 18), Adonizedec (Josh. x. 1), and Araunah (2 Sam. xxiv. 23); or, it may be, to Solomon's contemporaries of his own country (1 K. iv. 31) and of other countries who visited him (1 K. iv. 34, x. 24). For "in" Jerusalem render over.

17. *to know madness and folly*] A knowledge of folly would help him to discern wisdom, and to exercise that chief function of practical wisdom—to avoid folly.

18. We become more sensible of our ignorance and impotence, and therefore sorrowful, in proportion as we discover more of the constitution of nature and the scheme of Providence in the government of the world; every discovery serving to convince us that more remains concealed of which we had no suspicion before.

II. 1-11. Solomon's trial of God's second gift, viz. riches, and the enjoyment which riches supply; this brought him to the same result (cp. i. 12).

Comparing Solomon's action with Luke xii. 16-21, it must be remembered that

Solomon's object was the acquisition of wisdom, not self-indulgence, and that he did not fail to look forward to the certainty of death overtaking him.

3. *I sought &c.*] Rather, I resolved (lit. "I turned in my heart") to draw my flesh with wine (see marg.), my heart guiding me with wisdom. In the course of his attempt to answer the question of i. 3, whilst his heart was directing him (as a charioteer directs his horses or a shepherd his sheep) with wisdom, and whilst he was following that guidance, he determined to draw with him his flesh by wine, thus making his flesh, which he speaks of as distinct from himself (cp. Rom. vii. 25), a confederate and subsidiary in his attempt.

4-10. Cp. 1 K. vii. 1-12, ix. 15-19, x. 14-27, and 2 Chr. viii. 4.

5. *orchards*] Lit. "paradises," i.e. parks or pleasure-grounds (cp. Neh. ii. 8 note). Indications of at least three of these have been pointed out; one at Jerusalem near the pool of Siloam, called "the king's garden" (Neh. iii. 15; Jer. lii. 7); a second near Bethlehem (cp. v. 6); and a third in the remote north, on the heights of Hermon (Song of Sol. iv. 8, viii. 11).

6. *pools*] A short distance south of Bethlehem, in a valley in the defile of Urta, three "Pools of Solomon" are still shewn and an adjoining hill still bears the name of the "Little Paradise."

7. *I got*] Rather, I bought, in distinction from those born in the house. The "chil-

* 1 K. 9. 28.
& 10. 10.
14. 21, &c.
/ ch. 1. 16.

v ch. 8. 22.
& 5. 18.
& 9. 9.

h ch. 1. 3, 14.

i ch. 1. 17.
& 7. 25.

k Prov. 17. 24.
ch. 8. 1.

i Ps. 49. 10.

- 8 salem before me: 'I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as ¹musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So ²I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and ³this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was ⁴vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.
- 12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? ⁵even that which hath been already done. Then I saw ⁶that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. ⁷The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that ⁸one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it ⁹happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool. Therefore

¹ Heb. musical instrument and instruments.

² Or, in those things which

have been already done.

³ Heb. that there is an excellency in wisdom more

than in folly, &c.

⁴ Heb. happeneth to me, even to me.

dren of Solomon's servants" (cp. Ezra ii. 55, 58) were more probably of Canaanitish origin (1 K. ix. 20, 21, v. 15) than Hebrews (1 K. ix. 22).

possessions of great and small cattle] Rather, *herds of oxen and sheep*.

all...before me] King David's herds and flocks are mentioned in 1 Chr. xxvii. 29, 31: but we have no specific account of the wealth of other Canaanitish or Hebrew inhabitants of Jerusalem before Solomon.

8. *kings*] Both tributary (1 K. x. 15) and independent (1 K. v. 1, ix. 14, x. 2); the "provinces" probably correspond to the kingdoms mentioned in 1 K. iv. 21.

as musical...sorts] Rather, *Many women* (cp. 1 K. xi. 1-3).

10. *portion*] A word of frequent occurrence. By it Solomon describes the pleasure found in the act of working and also perhaps the pleasure felt in the process of acquiring wisdom; this pleasure is admitted to be good, if received from God (v. 26, v. 18; cp. 1 Tim. iv. 4); but being transitory it is subject to vanity, and therefore does not afford a sufficient answer to the repeated question, "What profit &c.?" (i. 3).

12-26. Solomon having found that wisdom and folly agree in being subject to vanity, now contrasts one with the other (v. 13). Both are brought under vanity by events (v. 14) which come on the wise man and the fool alike from without—death and oblivion (v. 16), uncertainty (v. 19), disap-

pointment (v. 21)—all happening by an external law beyond human control. Amidst this vanity, the good (see v. 10 note) that accrues to man, is the pleasure felt (24-26) in receiving God's gifts, and in working with and for them.

12. *what can the man do &c.*] i.e. "What is any man—in this study of wisdom and folly—after one like me, who, from my position, have had such peculiar advantages (see i. 16, and cp. ii. 25) for carrying it on? That which man did of old he can but do again: he is not likely to add to the result of my researches, nor even to equal them." Some hold that the "man" is a reference to Solomon's successor—not in his inquiries, but in his kingdom, i.e. Jeroboam.

14. *event*] Or, "hap" (Ruth ii. 3). The verb from which it is derived seems in this Book to refer specially to death. The word does not mean chance (cp. ix. 1, 2); independent of the ordering of Divine Providence: the Gentile notion of "mere chance," or "blind fate," is never once contemplated by the writer of this Book, and it would be inconsistent with his tenets of the unlimited power and activity of God.

16. *seeing that &c.*] Cp. i. 11. Some render, "as in time past, so in days to come, all will be forgotten;" others, "because in the days to come all will have been long before forgotten."

17. *I hated life*] Cp. this expression, ex-

- I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun *is* 18 grievous unto me: for all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had ¹ taken under the sun: because ^m I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. ⁿ Ps. 40. 10.
- 19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This *is* 20 also vanity. Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the ¹ labour which I took under the sun. For there is a man whose labour *is* in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he ² leave it for his portion. This also *is* vanity and a great evil.
- 22 ⁿ For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his ⁿ ch. 1. 3. heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his ^{& 3. 8.} days are ^o sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. ^o Job 5. 7. & 14. 1.
- 24 ^p There is nothing better for a man, *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* he ³ should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God. ^p ch. 3. 12, 13, 22. & 5. 18. & 8. 15.
- 25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten *hereunto*, more than I?
- 26 For God giveth to a man that *is* good ⁴ in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that ⁴ he may give to *him* that *is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit. ^q Job 27. 16, 17. Prov. 28. 8. ^a ver. 17. ch. 8. 6.

CHAP. 3. TO every thing there is a season, and a ^a time to every purpose under the heaven:

¹ Heb. *laboured*.
² Heb. *give*.

³ Or, *delight his senses*.

⁴ Heb. *before him*, Gen. 7. 1. Luke 1. 6.

torted from Solomon by the perception of the vanity of his wisdom and greatness, with Rom. viii. 22, 23. The words of Moses (Num. xi. 15), and of Job (iii. 21, vi. 9), are scarcely less forcible. This feeling is with some men a powerful motive to conversion (Luke xiv. 26).

19. *labour*] Cp. vv. 4-8.

20. *I went about*] i.e. I turned from one course of action to another.

23. *are sorrows...grief*] Rather, **sorrows and grief are his toil**. See i. 13.

24. *nothing better for a man, than that &c.*] Lit. **no good in man that &c.** The one joy of working or receiving, which, though it be transitory, a man recognizes as a real good, even that is not in the power of man to secure for himself: that good is the gift of God.

26. The doctrine of Retribution, or, the revealed fact that God is the moral Governor of the world, is here stated for the first time (cp. iii. 15, 17, &c.) in this Book.

This also is vanity] Not only the travail of the sinner. Even the best gifts of God, wisdom, knowledge, and joy, so far as they are given in this life, are not permanent, and are not always (see ix. 11) efficacious for the purpose for which they appear to be given.

III. 1-15. It follows from ii. 26 that the works of men are subject in their results to another will (God's) besides that of the doer.

Here is the germ of the great question of later times—how to reconcile man's freewill with God's decrees. Solomon's way of stating it is that to every separate work, which goes to make up the great aggregate of human activity (the "travail," v. 10), there is a season, an appropriate time which God appoints for its being done (vv. 1-8). To the question (v. 9) What profit? he answers that the works of men, if done according to God's appointment, are a part of that beautifully arranged scheme of Divine Providence which, as a whole, is, by reason of its extent and duration, incomprehensible to us (v. 11). Man's good is to rejoice and do good in his lifetime, which he can do only as God appoints (vv. 12, 13). God's work, of which this would be a part, is for ever, is perfect (and so not subject to vanity), and is calculated to teach men to fear Him (v. 14). His work, which was begun long ago, is now going on to completion; His work hereafter will be a complement of something which was done previously; and He recalls the past in order to add to it what shall make it complete and perfect (v. 15). The principle of Divine government—that every work in order to be permanent and successful must be God's work as well as man's work—is also declared in Pa. cxxvii. 1, 2 (attributed to Solomon).

1. *every thing*] More particularly the actions of men (e.g. his own, ii. 1-8) and

- ^b Heb. 9. 27. 2 A time ¹to be born, and ^ba time to die ;
 A time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is planted* ;
 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal ;
 A time to break down, and a time to build up ;
 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh ;
 A time to mourn, and a time to dance ;
 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together ;
^c Joel 2. 16. A time to embrace, and ^ca time ²to refrain from embracing ;
 1 Cor. 7. 5. 6 A time to ³get, and a time to lose ;
 A time to keep, and a time to cast away ;
^d Amos 5. 13. 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew ;
^e Luke 14. 26. ^dA time to keep silence, and a time to speak ;
 8 A time to love, and a time to ^ehate ;
 A time of war, and a time of peace.
^f ch. 1. 3. 9 ^fWhat profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth ?
^g ch. 1. 13. 10 ^gI have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of
 11 men to be exercised in it. He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time : also he hath set the world in their heart, so that
^h ch. 8. 17. ^hno man can find out the work that God maketh from the be-
 Rom. 11. 33. ⁱginning to the end. ⁱI know that *there is* no good in them, but
^j ver. 22. 12 for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also ^kthat
^k ch. 2. 24. 13 every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his
 14 labour, it *is* the gift of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever : ^lnothing can be put to it, nor any thing
^l Jam. 1. 17. taken from it : and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before
^m ch. 1. 9. 15 him. ^mThat which hath been is now ; and that which is to be hath already been ; and God requireth ⁿthat which is past.

¹ Heb. to bear.² Heb. to be far from.³ Or, seek.⁴ Heb. that which is driven away.

events which happen to men, the world of Providence rather than the world of creation. It would seem that most of his own works described in ii. 1-8 were present to his mind. The rare word translated "season" means emphatically "fitting time" (cp. Neh. ii. 6 ; Esth. ix. 27, 31).

5. Stones may be regarded either as materials for building, or as impediments to the fertility of land (see 2 K. iii. 19, 25 ; Isai. v. 2).

6. *get...lose*] Rather, *seek*, and a time to give up for lost.

7. *rend*] *i.e.* Tear garments in sign of mourning or anger. See 2 Sam. i. 2, 11 &c.

11. Rather, *He hath made all* (the travail, v. 10) *beautiful* (fit, in harmony with the whole work of God) *in its time* ; also *He hath set eternity in their heart* (*i.e.* the heart of the sons of men, v. 10).

The word, translated "world" in the text, and "eternity" in this note, is used seven times in Ecclesiastes.

The interpretation "eternity," is conceived in the sense of a long indefinite period of time, in accordance with the use of the word throughout this Book, and the rest of the Old Testament. God has placed in the inborn constitution of man the capa-

bility of conceiving of eternity, the struggle to apprehend the everlasting, the longing after an eternal life.

With the other meaning "the world," *i.e.* the material world, or universe, in which we dwell, the context is explained as referring either to the knowledge of the objects with which this world is filled, or to the love of the pleasures of the world. This meaning seems to be less in harmony with the context than the other : but the principal objection to it is that it assigns to the word in the original a sense which, although found in Rabbinical Hebrew, it never bears in the language of the Old Testament.

so...find] *i.e.* Without enabling man to find. Cp. vii. 13, viii. 17.

12. *in them*] *i.e.* in the sons of men.

to do good] In a moral sense. Physical enjoyment is referred to in v. 13.

14. The last clause of this verse goes beyond a declaration of the fact of God's government of the world (ii. 26) by adding the moral effect which that fact is calculated to produce on those who see it. It is the first indication of the practical conclusion (xii. 13) of the Book.

15. Rather, *What has been—that was before, and that which shall be has been*

- 16 And moreover ^a I saw under the sun the place of judgment, ^a *that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that*
 17 *iniquity was there. I said in mine heart, ^o God shall judge the*
righteous and the wicked: for there is ^p a time there for every
purpose and for every work.
 18 I said ^q *in mine heart concerning the ostate of the sons of men,*
¹ that God might manifest them, and that they might see that
 19 *they themselves are beasts. ^r For that which befalleth the sons*
of men befalleth ^s beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the
one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so
that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all ^t is vanity.
 20 All go unto one place; ^u *all are of the dust, and all turn to dust*
 21 *again. ^v Who knoweth the spirit ² of man that ³ goeth up-*
ward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the
 22 *earth? ⁴ Wherefore I perceive that there ⁵ is nothing better,*
than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for ⁶ that ^{is}
- ¹ Or, *that they might clear God, and see, &c.* ² Heb. *of the sons of man.* ³ Heb. *is ascending.*
⁴ ver. 12. ch. 2. 24. & 5. 18. & 11. 9. ch. 2. 10.
⁵ ch. 5. 8.
⁶ Rom. 2. 8. 7. 4. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7. ⁷ ver. 1.
⁸ Ps. 49. 12, 20. & 73. 22. ch. 2. 16.
⁹ Gen. 3. 19. ch. 12. 7.
¹⁰ ver. 12. ch. 2. 24. & 5. 18. & 11. 9. ch. 2. 10.

before. The word "is" in our A.V. is erroneously printed in Roman letters: it does not exist in the Hebrew; and the word there translated "now" is the same which is translated "already."

requireth] i.e. requireth for judgment, as the word specially means in 2 Sam. iv. 11; Ezek. iii. 18 &c. It is obvious from the context of the last clause of v. 14, and vv. 16, 17, that this is the meaning here.

past] Lit. "put to flight."

The meaning of the verse is that there is a connexion between events, past, present and future, and that this connexion exists in the justice of God Who controls all.

16-22. That great anomaly in the moral government of this world, the seemingly unequal distribution of rewards and punishments, will be rectified by God, Who has future times and events under His control (vv. 16, 17). As for men, they are placed by God, Who is their teacher, in a humble condition, even on a level with inferior animals, by death, that great instance of their subjection to vanity (vv. 18, 19), which reduces to its original form all that was made of the dust of the ground (v. 20). And though the destinies of man and beast are different, yet in our present want of knowledge as to God's future dealing with our spirits (v. 21), man finds his portion (see ii. 10 note) in such labour and such joy as God assigns to him in his lifetime (v. 22).

16. *I saw* &c.] Rather, I have seen (as in v. 10) *under the sun the place* &c. The place of judgment means the seat of the authorized judge. Compare "the place of the holy" (viii. 10).

17. *a time there*] i.e. a time with God.

18. Lit. *I said in my heart with regard to the sons of men, it is that God may prove them and shew them that they are*

beasts, they themselves. "Shewing" is the reading of the LXX. and Syriac: the present Hebrew text reads "seeing." The meaning is that the long delay of God's judgment (vv. 16, 17) is calculated to shew men that the brevity of their life renders them incapable of following out and understanding His distributive justice.

19. *that which befalleth the sons of men*] Lit. the event or hap of the sons of men, i.e. that which comes upon them from without, in virtue of the ordinance of God. See ii. 14 note. Death in particular (v. 2, 11) is a part of the "work that God doeth."

21. The A.V. of this verse is the only rendering which the Hebrew text, as now pointed, allows. It is in accordance with the best Jewish and many modern interpreters. A slightly different pointing would be requisite to authorize the translation, "Who knows the spirit of the sons of man whether it goes above, and the spirit of the beast whether it goes down below?" &c., which, though it seems neither necessary nor suitable, is sanctioned by the LXX. and other Versions and by some modern interpreters.

Who knoweth] This expression (used also in ii. 19, vi. 12) does not necessarily imply complete and absolute ignorance. In Ps. xc. 11, it is applied to that which is partially understood: compare similar forms of expression in Prov. xxxi. 10; Ps. xciv. 16; Isai. liii. 1. Moreover it is evident from marg. ref. that Solomon did not doubt the future existence and destination of the soul. This verse can only be construed as a confession of much ignorance on the subject.

22. *what shall be after him*] i.e. What shall become of the results of his work after he is dead. Cp. ii. 19, vi. 12.

- his portion: ^afor who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?
- CHAP. 4.** SO I returned, and considered all the ^aoppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the ^aside of ^atheir oppressors *there was* power; but they had no comforter. ^bWherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. ^cYea, better *is he* than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.
- Again, I considered all travail, and ²every right work, that ³for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. ⁴The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. ^eBetter *is* an handful *with* quietness, than both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.
- Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. There is one alone, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his ^feye satisfied with riches; ^gneither *sait* he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.
- Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
- Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king,
- ¹ Heb. *hand*.
² Heb. *all the rightness of work*.
³ Heb. *this is the envy of a man from his neighbour*.

IV. Having arrived (iii. 22) at a partial answer to his question (i. 3); viz. that there is positive good (= a portion) in that satisfaction which is found in working, Solomon now turns to the case of such happiness being interrupted and reduced to vanity by various contingencies—by oppression (vv. 1-3); by envy (vv. 4-6); by loneliness (vv. 7-12); and by decay of working power (vv. 13-16). The first two instances seem taken from the lower ranks of life, the last two from the higher.

1. *So I returned, and considered*] Rather, **And I returned and saw**. He turns to look on other phenomena, and to test by them his previous conclusion.

oppressed] See Introduction, p. 424.

4. *every right work*] Rather, **every success in work**.

for this &c.] i.e. "This successful work makes the worker an object of envy." Some understand the meaning to be, "this work is the effect of the rivalry of man with his neighbour."

5. *foldeth his hands*] The envious man is here exhibited in the attitude of the sluggard (marg. ref.).

eateth his own flesh] i.e. "Destroys him-

self:" cp. a similar expression in Isai. xlix. 26; Ps. xxvii. 2; Mic. iii. 3.

6. Either the fool's sarcasm on his successful but restless neighbour; or the comment of Solomon recommending contentment with a moderate competence. The former meaning seems preferable.

7-12. The spectacle of a prosperous man whose condition is rendered vain by his brotherless, childless isolation.

8. *a second*] Any one associated or connected with him.

9-12. Cp. a saying from the Talmud, "A man without companions is like the left hand without the right."

13-16. These verses set forth the vanity of earthly prosperity even on a throne. Opinion as to their application is chiefly divided between considering them a parable or fiction like that of the childless man in v. 8: or as setting forth first the vicissitudes of royal life in two proverbial sayings (vv. 13, 14), and then (vv. 15, 16), the vicissitudes or procession of the whole human race, one generation giving place to another, which in its turn will be forgotten by its successor. On the whole, the first appears to have the better claim.

13. *child*] Rather, **young man**.

14 ¹who will no more be admonished. For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also *he that is* born in his kingdom becometh poor. I considered all the living which walk under the sun, 16 with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. There is no end of all the people, *even* of all that have been before them: they also that have come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAP. 5. KEEP ^athy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, ^bthan to give the sacrifice of fools: 2 for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any ²thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words ^cbe few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and ^da fool's voice *is known* by multitude 4 of words. ^eWhen thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: ^fpay that which thou 5 hast vowed. ^gBetter *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that 6 thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; ^hneither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice,

¹ Heb. *who knoweth not to be admonished.*

² Or, *word.*

^a See Ex. 3.5. Isai. 1.12, &c.
^b 1 Sam. 15. 22.
^c Ps. 50. 8. Prov. 15. 8. Hos. 6. 6.
^d Prov. 10.19. Matt. 6. 7.
^e Prov. 10. 19.
^f Num. 30. 2. Deut. 23. 21, 22, 23.
^g Ps. 50. 14. Ps. 66. 13. ^h Prov. 20. 25. Acts 5. 4.
ⁱ 1 Cor. 11. 10.

14. Rather, For out of the house of bondage he goes forth to be a king; although he was born poor in his kingdom, *i.e.* in the country over which he became king.

15. *I considered &c.]* Lit. I saw "all the population of the young man's kingdom." *the second child]* This second youth is generally understood to be identical with the one mentioned in v. 13.

16. *There is]* Rather, *There was.* *that have been before them]* Rather, before whom he was, *i.e.* at the head of whom the young king was. Cp. Micah ii. 13. *they also that...him]* *i.e.* The next generation shall forget this chosen king.

V. The Preacher now begins to address his hearer in the second person. The soliloquy, hitherto unbroken, is henceforth interrupted by personal addresses, which are repeated with increasing frequency from this place to the end of the Book. They who divide the whole Book into two parts, the first theoretical, the second practical, begin the second division here.

There is a striking resemblance between the line of thought pursued in this Book and that of Asaph in Psalm lxxiii. As the Psalmist, so the Preacher, after setting forth his view of human life, takes his hearer into the house of God for an explanation and directions. If the expression "goest to the house of God" (v. 1) has also the spiritual sense of entering into communion with God, Solomon here admonishes generally that reverence is due to God, and particularly that the "vanity" which is mingled with the "portion" that God assigns to every man, ought to be treated as a divine

mystery, not to be made an occasion of idle thought, hasty words, and rash resolutions, but to be considered in the fear of God (vv. 1-7); that the spectacle of unjust oppression is to be patiently referred to God's supreme judgment (vv. 8, 9); that mere riches are unsatisfying, bring care with them, and if hoarded are transitory (vv. 10-17); and that a man's enjoyment of his portion in life, including both labour and riches, is the gift of God (vv. 18-20).

1. *Keep thy foot]* *i.e.* Give thy mind to what thou art going to do.

the house of God] It has been said that here an ordinary devout Hebrew writer might have been expected to call it "the house of Jehovah;" but to those who accept this Book as the work of Solomon after his fall into idolatry, it will appear a natural sign of the writer's self-humiliation, an acknowledgment of his unworthiness of the privileges of a son of the Covenant, that he avoids the name of the Lord of the Covenant (see i. 13 note).

be more ready to hear] Perhaps in the sense that, "to draw near for the purpose of hearing (and obeying) is better than &c."

6. *Suffer not thy mouth &c.] i.e.* Do not make rash vows which may hereafter be the cause of evasion and prevarication, and remain unfulfilled.

before the angel] The LXX. and some other Versions render "before the face of God," meaning a spiritual being representing the Presence of God, a minister of divine justice (Exod. xxiii. 21), such an one as inflicted judgment upon David (2 Sam. xxiv. 17). Others, with less probability, understand

- 7 and destroy the work of thine hands? For ¹the multitude of dreams and many words *there are* also *divers* vanities: but ²fear thou God.
- ³ ch. 3. 16. 8 If thou ⁴seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not ⁵at the matter: for ⁶he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and ⁷there be higher than they. Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field.
- ⁸ Ps. 12. 5. & 58. 11. & 82. 1. 10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he 11 that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of *them* 12 with their eyes? The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.
- ⁹ ch. 6. 1. 13 ¹⁰There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, 14 riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and *there* 15 *is* nothing in his hand. ¹¹As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. 16 And this also *is* a sore evil, *that* in all points as he came, so shall he go: and ¹²what profit hath he ¹³that hath laboured for the wind? all his days also ¹⁴he eateth in darkness, and *he hath* 17 much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.
- ¹⁵ ch. 1. 3. ¹⁶ Prov. 11. 20. ¹⁷ Ps. 127. 2. ¹⁸ ch. 2. 24. & 3. 12. 1 Tim. 6. 17. 18 Behold *that* which I have seen: ¹⁹it *is* good and comely *for* one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun ²⁰all the days of his life, which God giveth him: ²¹for it *is* his portion. ²²Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; 19 20 this *is* the gift of God. ²³For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth *him* in the joy of his heart.
- ²⁴ ch. 5. 13. **CHAP. 6.** ²⁵There is an evil which I have seen under the sun,
- ¹ Heb. at the will, or, purpose. ² Heb. there is a good which ³ is comely, &c. ⁴ Or, Though he give not much, yet he remembereth, &c.

the Angel to be a priest, and refer to Mal. ii. 7.

7. *For...vanities*] Or, *For so it happens through many dreams and vanities and many words.*

8. *matter*] Rather, *purpose* (as in marg., and iii. 1), referring either to the will of God or to the edict of an oppressive ruler.

for he...they] Lit. *for high watches over high and the Highest over them*, i.e. the king in the capital watches over the judge or governor in the province, and God over both. This seems more in harmony with the preceding verses, and more agreeable to the scope of this passage than to understand the passage only of earthly rulers.

9. *the king himself is served by the field*] Rather, *the king is subject to the field*, i.e. is dependent on its cultivation. The higher ranks, if they oppress the lower, lose thereby their own means of subsistence. •

11. *they...that eat them*] i.e. The labourers employed, and the household servants.

12. *labouring man*] Not a slave (LXX.), but every one who, according to the divine direction, earns his bread in the sweat of his brow.

14. *evil travail*] Adverse accident, or unsuccessful employment (cp. i. 13, iv. 8).

17. *hath much sorrow &c.*] Rather, *is very sad and hath pain and vexation.*

18. Rather, *Behold what I have seen to be good, it is pleasant for a man to eat.* Such thankful enjoyment is inculcated by the Law (Deut. xii. 7, 18).

20. The days will pass smoothly and pleasantly, whilst he lives in the consciousness of God's favour. •

answereth him] i.e. grants his prayers.

VI. The Preacher in this chapter contemplates the case of men to whom God gives wealth, honour, success, children, and

- 2 and it is common among men: a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, ^bso that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, ^cyet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and ^dalso that he have no burial; I say, 4 that ^ean untimely birth is better than he. For he cometh in with vanity; and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be 5 covered with darkness. Moreover he hath not seen the sun, 6 nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?
- 7 All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite 8 is not filled. For what hath the wise more than the fool? what 9 hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes ²than the wandering of the desire: this 10 is also vanity and vexation of spirit. That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: ³neither may he 11 contend with him that is mightier than he. Seeing there be

^b Job 21. 10, &c.
^c Ps. 17. 14. & 73. 7.
^d Luke 12.

^e 2 K. 9. 35.
Isai. 14. 19, 20.
Jer. 22. 19.
^f Job 3. 16.
Ps. 68. 8.
ch. 4. 3.

^f Prov. 16. 20.

^g Job 9. 32.
Isai. 45. 9.
Jer. 40. 19.

¹ Heb. soul.

² Heb. than the walking of the soul.

long life, yet withholds from them the capacity of enjoyment, rest, permanence or contentment (vv. 1-9). What then is good for man to do, whose lot in life is so thoroughly subject to vanity? (vv. 10-12).

1. common among] Rather, great (heavy) upon men.

3. no burial] For a corpse to lie unburied was a circumstance in itself of peculiar ignominy and dishonour (cp. marg. ref.).

4. he...his] Rather, it...its. The untimely birth is spoken of.

5. Rather, he hath not seen nor known the sun: this (the untimely birth) hath rest rather than the other.

6. he live] Rather, he hath lived. "He" refers to the man (v. 3). His want of satisfaction in life, and the dishonour done to his corpse, are regarded as such great evils that they counterbalance his numerous children, and length of days, and render his lot viewed as a whole no better than the common lot of all.

7-9. Connect these verses with vv. 2, 3:—"All labour is undertaken with a view to some profit, but as a rule the men who labour are never satisfied. What advantage then has he who labours if (being rich) he is wise, or if being poor he knows how to conduct himself properly; what advantage have such labourers above a fool? (None, so far as they are without contentment; for) a thing present before the eyes is preferable to a future which exists only in the desire."

8. what] Lit. what profit (as in i. 3). knoweth...living] i.e. "Knows how to conduct himself rightly among his contemporaries."

10. Or, "That which has been named—i.e. events past or current, either (i. 9) as they present themselves to man, or (iii. 15) as they are ordered by God—was long ago (i.e. was decreed, its nature and place were defined by the Almighty), and was known that it is man;" i.e. the course of events shapes the conduct and character of man, so that what he does and suffers is said to be or constitute the man. God from the beginning definitely ordained the course of events external to man, and constituted man in such a way that events materially affect his conduct and his destiny. Hence God, by withholding from certain men the gift of contentment, and thus subjecting them to vanity, is acting according to the predetermined course of His Providence which man cannot alter (cp. Rom. viii. 20). Others translate, "What there is, its name is named long ago and known, that it is man;" i.e. "What hath been and is, not only came into existence long ago (i. 9, iii. 15), but also has been known and named, and is acknowledged that it, besides other things, is specially man; that man always remains the same, and cannot go beyond his appointed bounds."

him that is mightier] i.e. God; cp. ix. 1; 1 Cor. x. 22, and marg. ref.

11. things] Namely, the various circumstances detailed in the foregoing chapters, from the Preacher's personal experience, and his observation of other men, ending with the comprehensive declaration in v. 10 to the effect that vanity is an essential part of the constitution of creation as it now exists, and was foreknown.

what is man the better?] Rather, what is profitable to man?

12 many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? For who knoweth what is good for man in *this* life, 'all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as ^aa shadow? for 'who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

^a Ps. 102. 11.
& 109. 23.
Jam. 4. 14.

^uu. c. f.
^a Prov. 15. 30.
& 22. 1.

CHAP. 7. A "GOOD name is better than precious ointment;
And the day of death than the day of one's birth.

2 *It is* better to go to the house of mourning,
Than to go to the house of feasting:
For that *is* the end of all men;
And the living will lay *it* to his heart.

3 *Sorrow is* better than laughter:

^b 2 Cor. 7. 10. ^bFor by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning;
But the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

5 *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise,
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.

^c See
Ps. 141. 5.
Prov. 13. 18.
^d Ps. 118. 12.
ch. 2. 2.

6 *For as the* ^ccrackling of thorns under a pot,
So *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.

7 Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad;
^eAnd a gift destroyeth the heart.

^e Ex. 23. 8.
Deut. 16. 19.

¹ Heb. *the number of the days of the life of his vanity.*

² Or, *anger.*
³ Heb. *sound.*

12. *after him*] i.e. On earth, in his own present sphere of action, after his departure hence (cp. ii. 19, iii. 22).

VII. Chs. vii. and x. shew a striking resemblance to the style of the writer of the Book of Proverbs. Hitherto the principal object has been to state the vanity of the conditions of human life: henceforth the principal object will be to direct man how to conduct himself under those conditions.

The general drift of the writer's counsels throughout the last six chapters, and particularly in vii. 1-22, points to wisdom united with the fear of God as the "good for man in this life." It is illustrated by frequent reference to, and contrast with, that evil which consists of folly allied with wickedness.

1. *name...ointment*] The likeness between reputation and odour supplies a common metaphor: the contrast is between reputation, as an honourable attainment which only wise men win, and fragrant odour, as a gratification of the senses which all men enjoy.

The connexion of this verse with the preceding verses is this:—the man, who wants to know what is profitable for man and good in this life, is here told to act in such a way as ordinarily secures a good reputation (i.e. to act like a wise man), and to teach himself this hard lesson,—to regard the day of death as preferable to the day of birth. Though Solomon seems in some places to feel strongly (ii. 16, iii. 19, 20 &c.) that natural fear of death which is, in a great measure, mistrust founded on

the ignorance which Christ dispelled; yet he states the advantage of death over life in respect of its freedom from toil, oppression, restlessness (ii. 17, iv. 2, vi. 5), and in respect of its implying an immediate and a nearer approach to God (iii. 21, xii. 7). While Solomon preferred the day of death, he might still (with Luther here) have regarded birth as a good thing, and as having its place in the creation of God.

2. *that*] Namely, what is seen in the house of mourning.

lay it to his heart] Consider it attentively.

3. *Sorrow*] Rather, **Seriousness.**

the heart is made better] i.e. is made bright and joyful (cp. 2 Cor. vi. 10). The mind which bears itself equally in human concerns, whether they be pleasant or sorrowful, must always be glad, free, and at peace.

4. *house of mourning...house of mirth*] These phrases acquire a forcible significance from the Eastern custom of prolonging both festive and mournful celebrations through several days. See Gen. i. 10; Judg. xiv. 17. This verse indicates that a life of enjoyment, does not mean the abandonment of ourselves to pleasures, but the thankful and sober use of the beautiful things which God gives us.

6. *as the crackling of thorns*] Noisy while it lasts, and quickly extinguished. See Ps. lviii. 9 note.

7. Rather, **oppression** (or **extortion**) **maketh a wise man foolish; and a bribe &c.** If a wise man, being in a high position, exercises oppression (see Ps. lxxii. 10), or practises extortion, he becomes a fool in

- 8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof :
 • And ¹ the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Prov. 14. 29.
 9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry :
 For anger resteth in the bosom of fools. ² Prov. 14. 17.
 10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these ? Jam. 1. 19.
 For thou dost not enquire ¹ wisely concerning this.
 11 Wisdom is ² good with an inheritance :
 And by it there is profit ³ to them that see the sun. ⁴ ch. 11. 7.
 12 For wisdom is a ³ defence, and money is a defence :
 But the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.
 13 Consider the work of God :
 For who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked ? ¹ See Job 12. 14.
 14 ² In the day of prosperity be joyful, ch. 1. 15.
 But in the day of adversity consider : Isai. 14. 27.
 God also hath ⁴ set the one over against the other, ⁵ ch. 3. 4.
 To the end that man should find nothing after him. Deut. 28. 47.
 15 All things have I seen in the days of my vanity : ¹ there is a ² ch. 8. 14.
 just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a

¹ Heb. out of wisdom.² Or, as good as an inheritance, yea, better too.³ Heb. shadow.⁴ Heb. made.

so doing. This verse is a warning against impatience in the exercise of power or the acquisition of riches.

8. Better] Inasmuch as something certain is attained, man contemplates the end throughout an entire course of action, and does not rest upon the beginning.

patient...proud] Lit. "Long," long-suffering... "high," in the sense of impatient.

11. And by it there is profit &c.] Lit. And is profitable to the living. The same word as in vi. 11, to the question in which it looks like an answer.

12. wisdom is a defence &c.] See marg. and Ps. cxxi. 5, i.e., He who is defended from adversity by his wisdom is in as good a position as he who is defended by his riches.

excellency] Lit. Profit. giveth life to] Lit. "Causes to live," "makes alive" (Prov. iii. 18); the deeper meaning of which is elicited by comparing these words with John vi. 63; Matt. iv. 4.

13. the work of God] The scheme of Divine Providence, the course of events which God orders and controls (cp. iii. 11). It comprises both events which are "straight," i.e. in accordance with our expectation, and events which are "crooked," i.e. which by their seeming inequality baffle our comprehension.

14. Good and prosperous days are in God's design peculiar times of comfort and rejoicing: the days of affliction and trouble, are in God's design the proper seasons of recollection and serious consideration. The Providence of God hath so contrived it, that our good and evil days should be intermingled each with the other. This mix-

ture of good and evil days is by the Divine Providence so proportioned, that it sufficiently justifies the dealings of God towards the sons of men, and obviates all their discontent and murmurings against Him.

set the one over against the other] Rather, made this as well as that, i.e. the day of adversity, as well as the day of prosperity. The seeming imitation of this passage in Ecclesiasticus (xxxvi. 13-15) affords a strong presumption that this Book was written before the days of the son of Sirach.

to the end &c.] God hath constituted the vicissitude of prosperity and adversity in such a way that no man can forecast the events that shall follow when he is removed from his present state. Cp. vi. 12 note.

15. the days of my vanity] This does not imply that those days of vanity were ended (see i. 12 note).

15-17. The meaning may be best explained by a paraphrase. Solomon states how the wise man should regard the "crooked (v. 13) work of God" when it bears upon him. He says in effect, "Do not think that thou couldst alter the two instances (described in v. 15) of such crooked work so as to make it straight, that thou art more righteous or more wise than He is Who ordained these events. To set up thy judgment in opposition to His would imply an excess of wickedness and folly, deserving the punishment of premature death. But rather it is good for thee to grasp these seeming anomalies; if thou ponder them they will tend to impress on thee that fear of God which is a part of wisdom, and will guide thee safely through all the perplexities

- ^m Prov. 25. 16 wicked *man* that prolongeth *his* life in his wickedness. ^m Be
 16. not righteous over much; ⁿ neither make thyself over wise: why
ⁿ Rom. 12. 3. 17 shouldest thou 'destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked,
 neither be thou foolish: ^o why shouldest thou die ² before thy
^o Job 15. 32. 18 time? *It is* good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea,
 Ps. 55. 23. 18 time? *It is* good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea,
 Prov. 10. 27. also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth
^p Prov. 21. 22. 19 God shall come forth of them all. ^p Wisdom strengtheneth the
 ch. 9. 16. 20 wise more than ten mighty *men* which are in the city. ^q For
^q 1 K. 8. 46. *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth
 2 Chr. 6. 36. 21 not. Also ³ take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest
 Prov. 20. 9. 22 thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own
 Rom. 3. 23. heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.
 1 John 1. 8. ^r Rom. 1. 22. 23 All this have I proved by wisdom: ^r I said, I will be wise;
^s Job 23. 12, 20. 24 but it *was* far from me. ^s That which is far off, and ^t exceeding
 1 Tim. 6. 16. 25 deep, who can find it out? ^t ^u I applied mine heart to know,
^t Rom. 11. 33. and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of *things*,
^u ch. 1. 17. and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and
^v Prov. 5. 3, 4. 26 madness: ^v and I find more bitter than death the woman, whose
 heart *is* snares and nets, and her hands *as* bands: ^w whose pleaseth
 God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by
^v ch. 1. 1, 2 27 her. Behold, this have I found, saith ^v the preacher, ^w *counting*
 28 one by one, to find out the account: which yet my soul seeketh,
^w Job 33. 23. but I find not: ^x one man among a thousand have I found; but
 Ps. 12. 1. a woman among all those have I not found.
^x Gen. 1. 27. 29 Lo, this only have I found, ^x that God hath made man upright;
^y Gen. 3. 6, 7. but ^y they have sought out many inventions.

CHAP. 8. WHO *is* as the wise *man*? and who knoweth ^r the inter-

¹ Heb. *be desolate*?

² Heb. *not in thy time*?

³ Heb. *gave not thine heart*.

⁴ Heb. *I and my heart com-*
passed.

⁵ Heb. *he that is good be-*
fore God.

⁶ Or, weighing *one thing*
after another, to find out
the reason.

of this life" (cp. viii. 12, 13). The suggestion that these verses are intended to advocate a middle course between sin and virtue is at variance with the whole tenor of the Book.

16. *destroy thyself*] LXX. and Vulg. render, "be amazed." Cp. "marvel not" (v. 8).

20. The connexion of this verse with vv. 18, 19 becomes clearer if it is borne in mind that the fear of God, wisdom, and justice, are merely different sides of one and the same character, the formation of which is the aim of all the precepts in this chapter. The words "just" (vv. 15, 20) and "righteous" (v. 16) are exactly the same in Hebrew.

21, 22. *curse...cursed*] Rather, *spoke evil of...spoken evil of*.

23. *I will be*] Or, *I am*. There was a time when Solomon thought himself wise enough to comprehend the work of God, and therefore needed for himself the self-humbling conviction declared in this verse.

it &c.] Wisdom. Cp. viii. 17.)

24. Lit. *Far off is that which hath been &c.*, events as they have occurred in the order of Divine Providence), and deep, deep, who can find it out?

25. *reason*] The same word is translated "account" (v. 27), "invention" (v. 29), and "device" (ix. 10): it is derived from a root signifying "to count."

26. Cp. the account of Solomon's wives (1 K. xi. 1-8): see also Prov. ii. 16-19, v. 3 &c.

28. *one man*] One whose good qualities quite satisfy our expectation. Cp. the expression "one among a thousand" (marg. ref.).

a woman] The number of Solomon's wives and concubines (1 K. xi. 3) was a thousand.

29. *God hath made*] Rather, *God made*. A definite allusion to the original state of man: in which he was exempt from vanity.

VIII. Although in some degree baffled in his own pursuit of wisdom, Solomon yet regards wisdom as the nearest approach to "that good for man" which he is seeking; and presses here, as a part of that wisdom, a spirit of obedience (vv. 1-5). In the face of the incomprehensible course of external events, he determined to abide in the fear and trust of God (vv. 6-14), and to acknowledge the natural incompetence of every man to find out the unsearchable ways of God (vv. 15-17).

1. and who] Rather, and as he who knoweth. The possessor of wisdom excels

ECCLESIASTES. VIII.

- pretation of a thing? "a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and ^{1b} the boldness of his face shall be changed.
- 2 I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. "Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou? Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.
- 6 Because ⁷ to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. "For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him? when it shall be?
- 8 ^h There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.
- 9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.
- 11 ^k Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that ^m it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.
- ¹ Heb. the strength.
² Heb. shall know.
³ Or, how it shall be?
⁴ Or, casting off weapons.

^a Prov. 4. 8, 9.
See Acts 6. 15.
^b Deut. 28. 50.
^c Ezek. 17. 18.
Rom. 13. 5.
^d ch. 10. 4.
^e Job 34. 18.
^f ch. 3. 1.
^g Prov. 24. 22.
ch. 6. 12.
^h & 10. 4.
ⁱ Ps. 49. 6, 7.
^j Job 14. 5.
^k Ps. 10. 6.
^l & 50. 21.
Isai. 26. 10.
^m Isai. 65. 20.
Rom. 2. 5.
ⁿ Ps. 37. 11
18, 19.
Prov. 1. 32, 33.
Isai. 3. 10.
Matt. 25. 34, 41.

other men: it imparts serenity to his countenance, and removes the expression of gloom or fierceness (see marg. ref.).

2. oath.] A reference to the oath of allegiance taken to Solomon at his accession to the throne (1 Chr. xxix. 24 marg.).

3. stand not &c.] i.e. "Do not persist in rebellion."

5. feel.] Lit. know. The meaning is, "He who obeys the commandment (i.e. the word of the king, v. 4), will not be an accomplice in any act of rebellion; and if he be a wise man he discerns (lit. knows) that the king's commandment or action is liable to correction, if it be wrong, in God's time and by God's judgment." Cp. iii. 11, 17.

6. Because, therefore.] Or, as in v. 7, "for."

The possibility of God's time and judgment being in opposition to a king's purpose or commandment (v. 5), suggests the thought that such discord is a misery (=evil, vi. 1) common to man (or, mankind).

7. when.] Or, as in marg. For the meaning of this verse, cp. marg. ref.

8. neither hath he power.] Rather, and there is no power. Cp. iii. 19.

no discharge &c.] i.e. "No exemption from

the final hour of struggle between life and death."

wickedness.] Though the life of the wicked may be prolonged (vii. 15), yet wickedness itself has no inherent power to prolong that life.

9. to his own hurt.] Or, "to the hurt of the subject." The case is still that of an unwise king whose command is obeyed (v. 2) even to the hurt of the wise man who obeys him.

10. i.e. "I saw wicked (rulers) buried, who came into the world and went from the Holy Place (the seat of authority and justice, Deut. xix. 17; 2 Chr. xix. 6), and they were forgotten in the city where they had so ruled to the hurt of their subjects: this—their death and oblivion—shews their lot also to be vanity." Others interpret the verse: "I have seen wicked men buried; and (others) came into the world, and from the Holy Place they went out of the world, and were forgotten in the city where they had done rightly" (cp. 2 K. vii. 9).

12. his days be prolonged.] i.e. in his wickedness (v. 8).

I is emphatic, as if to mark the opposition to the "sons of men" (v. 11).

- 14 There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just *men*, unto whom it ^ahappeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked *men*, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity. ^oThen I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.
- 16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:) then I beheld all the work of God, that ^aa man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise *man* think to know it, ^ayet shall he not be able to find it.
- 17 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:) then I beheld all the work of God, that ^aa man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise *man* think to know it, ^ayet shall he not be able to find it.
- CHAP. 9. FOR all this ¹I considered in my heart even to declare all this, ^athat the righteous, and the wise, and their works, *are* in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred *by* all *that is* before them. ^bAll things come alike to all: *there is* one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner; and he that sweareth, as *he* that feareth an oath. This *is* an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go*

^a Ps. 73. 14.
ch. 3. 14.
2. 7. 15.
2. 9. 1. 2.
^o ch. 2. 24.
2. 9. 12, 22.
2. 6. 18.
2. 9. 7.

^a Job 5. 9.
ch. 3. 11.
Rom. 11. 33.

^a Ps. 73. 16.

^a ch. 8. 14.

^b Job. 21. 7,
&c.
Ps. 73. 3,
12, 13.
Mal. 3. 15.

¹ Heb. *I gave, or, set to my heart.*

14. *which is done upon the earth*] The instance of vanity, to which these words are applied, is the seeming inequality of God's justice; but if they are considered in connexion with the profession of personal faith in God's absolute justice (v. 12), the conclusion is irresistible, that, whatever reason the Preacher had for reserve in declaring his belief, he certainly looked forward to a final judgment in a future state of existence (cp. iii. 17, xii. 14).

15. *mirth*] Better, *Gladness*, or "joy" (as in ii. 10). The Hebrew word is applied not only to the pleasures arising from the bodily senses, but also frequently to religious joy. The sentiment of this verse is a frequent conclusion of the writer's personal experience (cp. marg. refl.), and is unfairly charged with Epicureanism. The Preacher is careful to set forth pleasure as a gift from God, to be earned by labour, and received with thankfulness to the Giver, and to be accounted for to Him. His estimate of the pleasures of the senses is recorded in vii. 2-6.

16, 17. These verses supplement v. 15 with the reflection that the man who goes beyond that limited sphere within which he can labour and be contented, and investigates the whole work of God, will find that his finite intelligence cannot grasp it.

16. *business*] Or, "travail" (i. 13, iii. 10).

The sleeplessness noted probably refers to the writer himself.

IX. In vv. 1-12 reasons are adduced for the universal conclusion (viii. 17) that no man can understand the works of God. This does not, however, prevent the assertion of the practical advantage in this life of that wisdom which includes the fear of God (v. 13 &c.). Cp. vv. 1-10 with Wisd. ii. 1-9.

1. A good man's trust in God is set forth as a counterpoise to our ignorance of the ways of Providence.

in the hand of God] Under His special protection (Deut. xxxiii. 3 &c.) as righteous, and under His direction (Prov. xxi. 1) as men.

no man &c.] Lit. both love and also hatred man knoweth not: all are before them. Love and hatred here mean the ordinary outward tokens of God's favour or displeasure, i.e. prosperity and adversity. "Man knoweth not" probably means: "man knows not whether to expect prosperity or adversity from God; all his earthly future is in obscurity."

2. *event*] See ii. 14 note.

sweareth] i.e. Swears lightly or profanely.

3. Cp. viii. 11. Theseeming indiscriminate-ness of the course of events tends to encourage evil-disposed men in their folly.

- 4 to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there
 5 is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the
 living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any
 thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory
 6 of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their
 envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for
 ever in any thing that is done under the sun.
 7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with
 8 a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy gar-
 ments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.
 9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the
 life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the
 days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy
 10 labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand
 findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor
 device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou
 goest.
 11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to
 the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the
 wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to
 12 men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For
 a man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in
 an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare;
 so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth
 suddenly upon them.
 13 This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great

c Job 14. 21.

Isai. 63. 16.

d Job 7. 8,

9, 10.

Isai. 26. 14.

e ch. 8. 15.

f ch. 2. 10.

24. & 3. 13.

22. & 5. 18.

g Amos 2.

14, 15.

Jer. 9. 23.

h ch. 8. 7.

i Prov. 29. 6.

Luke 12.

20, 39.

1 Thess. 5. 3.

¹ Heb. See, or, Enjoy life.

4. For to him] Rather, Yet to him. Notwithstanding evils, life has its advantage, and specially when compared with death.

dog] To the Hebrews a type of all that was contemptible (1 Sam. xvii. 43).

5, 6. See viii. 12, 14 note. The living are conscious that there is a future before them: but the dead are unconscious; they earn nothing, receive nothing, even the memory of them soon disappears; they are no longer excited by the passions which belong to men in this life; their share in its activity has ceased. Solomon here describes what he sees, not what he believes; there is no reference here to the fact or the mode of the existence of the soul in another world, which are matters of faith.

The last clause of v. 6 indicates that the writer confines his observations on the dead to their portion in, or relation to, this world.

6. now] Rather, long ago.

7-12. Read these six verses connectedly, in order to arrive at the meaning of the writer; and cp. ii. 1-12.

After the description (vv. 5, 6) of the portionless condition of the dead, the next thought which occurs is that the man who is prosperous and active should simply enjoy his portion all through this life (vv. 7-10); and then (vv. 11, 12) follows the correct-

ing thought (see iii. 1-15 note), introduced as usual (ii. 12, iv. 1, 7) by "I returned," viz. that the course of events is disposed and regulated by another Will than that of man.

The person addressed is one whose life of labour is already pleasing to God, and who bears visible tokens of God's favour.

7. now accepteth] Rather, already has pleasure in. Joy (marg. ref. note) is regarded as a sign of the approbation and favour of God.

8. White garments and perfume are simply an expressive sign of joy.

10. The works which we carry on here with the combined energies of body and soul come to an end in the hour of death, when the soul enters a new sphere of existence, and body and soul cease to act together. Cp. John ix. 4.

device] See vii. 25 note.

11. chance] Or, "incident," that which comes to us from without, one of the external events described in ch. iii. Cp. ii. 14 note.

12. time] See iii. 1 & c.

13. Or, Also this have I seen—wisdom under the sun, and great it seemed to me.

From this verse to the end of ch. x., the writer inculcates, in a series of proverbs, wisdom in contrast to folly, as the best remedy in the present life to the evil of vanity.

* See
2 Sam. 20.
16-22.

¹ Prov. 21.
22: & 24, 5.
ch. 7, 19.
ver. 18.
¹⁰ Mark 6.
2, 3.

¹¹ ver. 16.
¹² Josh. 7, 1,
11, 12.

^a Prov. 13.
16, & 18, 2.
^b ch. 8, 3.

^c 1 Sam. 25.
24, &c.
Prov. 25, 15.

^d Esth. 3, 1.

- 14 unto me: ^k *There was* a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. ^l Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless ^m the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.
- 17 The words of wise men are heard in quiet More than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.
- 18 ⁿ Wisdom is better than weapons of war: But ^o one sinner destroyeth much good.

CHAP. 10. DEAD ¹ flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour:

So doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

- 2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand;
But a fool's heart at his left.

- 3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, ² his wisdom faileth him,

^a And he saith to every one *that* he is a fool.

- 4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, ^b leave not thy place;

For ^c yielding pacifieth great offences.

- 5 There is an evil *which* I have seen under the sun,
As an error *which* proceedeth ³ from the ruler:

- 6 ^d Folly is set ⁴ in great dignity,—and the rich sit in low place.

¹ Heb. *Flies of death.*

² Heb. *his heart.*

³ Heb. *from before.*

⁴ Heb. *in great heights.*

14, 15. A parable probably without foundation in fact. Critics who ascribe this Book to a late age offer no better suggestion than that the "little city" may be Athens delivered B.C. 480 from the host of Xerxes through the wisdom of Themistocles, or Dora besieged B.C. 218 by Antiochus the Great.

Verses 16, 17 are comments on the two facts—the deliverance of the city and its forgetfulness of him who delivered it—stated in v. 15.

18. *sinner*] The word in the original indicates intellectual as well as moral error.

X. This chapter resembles a portion of the Book of Proverbs, consisting entirely of rhythmical sentences giving advice, more or less direct, as to conduct. It is part of the writer's answer to the question (if. 3, vi. 12) "What is good for men to do?" The thought which underlies the whole chapter is the advantage of that wisdom which includes piety and patience, as practical guidance through all the perplexities of life: various traits of wisdom are set forth in a favourable light, heightened by contrast with folly. A great part of the advice seems, in addition to its general application, to have a special reference to servants of a king.

1. This verse is by its meaning so closely

connected with ix. 18 that the selection of it for the beginning of a new chapter seems unfortunate.

apothecary] Rather, *dealer in spices and perfumes* (cp. Ex. xxx. 25). The swarms of flies in the East very soon corrupt and destroy any moist unguent or mixture left uncovered, and pollute a dish of food in a few minutes.

so doth &c.] Lit. *more weighty than wisdom, than honour, is a little folly.*

2. The metaphor perhaps means "A wise man's sense is in its place, ready to help and protect him; but a fool's is missing when it is wanted, and so is useless."

3. "Way" may be understood either literally (cp. v. 15), or figuratively, of the course of action which he follows.

he saith &c.] He exposes his folly to every one he meets.

4. *If the spirit &c.*] i.e. If he be angry. *leave not thy place*] i.e. Do not lose thy self-control and quit his presence. Gentleness on thy part will calm both thyself and him, and prevent great wrongs being committed by either.

6, 7. The "evil" of a 5 is here specified as that caprice of a king by which an unworthy favourite of low origin is promoted to successive dignities, while a noble person is degraded or neglected.

- 7 I have seen servants ^aupon horses,
And princes walking as servants upon the earth. ^a Prov. 19.
10. & 30. 22.
- 8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it;
And whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. ^f Ps. 7. 15.
Prov. 26. 27.
- 9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith;
And he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.
- 10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge,
Then must he put to more strength:
But wisdom is profitable to direct.
- 11 Surely the serpent will bite ^gwithout enchantment;
And ^ha babbler is no better. ^g Ps. 58. 4, 5.
Jer. 8. 17.
- 12 ^hThe words of a wise man's mouth are ²gracious;
But ⁱthe lips of a fool will swallow up himself. ^h Prov. 10.
32.
& 12. 13.
- 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness:
And the end of ^jhis talk is mischievous madness. ⁱ Prov. 10.
14.
& 18. 7.
^k Prov. 15. 2.
- 14 ^kA fool also ^lis full of words:
A man cannot tell what shall be;
And ^mwhat shall be after him, who can tell him? ^l ch. 3. 23.
& 6. 12.
& 8. 7.
- 15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them,
Because he knoweth not how to go to the city.
- 16 ⁿWoe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child,
And thy princes eat in the morning!
Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles,
And ^othy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! ⁿ Isai. 3. 4,
5, 12.
^o Prov. 31. 4.
- 18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth;
And through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.
- 19 A feast is made for laughter, and ^pwine ^qmaketh merry:
But money answereth all things. ^p Ps. 104. 15.
- 20 ^rCurse not the king, no not in thy ^sthought;
^r Ex. 22. 28
Acts 23. 5.
- ¹ Heb. the master of the tongue.
² Heb. grace.
³ Heb. his mouth.
⁴ Heb. multiplieth words.
⁵ Heb. maketh glad the life.
⁶ Or, conscience, figure like, Luke 19. 40.

8-10. The figures seem to be taken from the work of building up and pulling down houses. In their general application, they recommend the man who would act wisely to be cautious when taking any step in life which involves risk.

8. *breaketh an hedge*] Rather, *breaks through a wall*.

serpent] The habit of snakes is to nestle in a chink of a wall, or among stones (cp. Amos v. 19).

9. *be endangered*] Rather, *cut himself*.

11. *Rather, If a serpent without enchantment* (i.e. not being enchanted) bites, then there is no advantage to the charmer: i.e. if the charmer is unwisely slack in exercising his craft, he will be bitten like other people. See Ps. lviii. 4 note.

14. *full of words*] Confident talking of the future is indicated rather than mere loquacity. Cp. Jas. iv. 13.

15. The sense is, "The fool wearies himself with ineffectual attempts, he has

not sufficient knowledge for the transaction of ordinary business."

16-20. Foolish rulers, by their weakness, self-indulgence and sloth, bring decay upon the state: nobleness and temperance insure prosperity: yet the subject must not rebel in word or thought against his king.

16. *a child*] Rather, *young*. The word is applied to Rehoboam (2 Chr. xiii. 7) at the time of his accession to the throne, when he was 41 years old.

eat in the morning] A sign of intemperance (cp. Isai. v. 11).

17. *son of nobles*] i.e. of a noble disposition.

18. The "building" or "house" represents the state. Cp. Isai. iii. 6; Amos ix. 10. *droppeth through*] i.e. Lets the rain through the roof.

19. *Lit. For merriment they make a feast* (= bread), and wine gladdens the living, and money supplies all things.

20. *Curse*] Cp. vii. 21, 22.

And curse not the rich in thy bedchamber :
For a bird of the air shall carry the voice,
And that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

^a See Isai. 32. 20.
^b Deut. 15. 10.
Prov. 19. 17.
Matt. 10. 42.
2 Cor. 9. 8.
Gal. 6. 9.
Heb. 6. 10.
^c Ps. 112. 9.
Luke 6. 30.
1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.
^d Mic. 5. 5.
^e Eph. 5. 18.
^f John 3. 8.
^g Ps. 139. 14, 15.

CHAP. 11. CAST thy bread ^a upon the waters :

^b For thou shalt find it after many days.

2 ^c Give a portion ^d to seven, and also to eight ;

^e For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth :

And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north,
In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

4 He that observeth the wind shall not sow ;

And he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

5 As ^f thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit,

^g Nor how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with child :

Even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

6 In the morning sow thy seed,

And in the evening withhold not thine hand :

For thou knowest not whether ^h shall prosper, either this or that,

Or whether they both *shall be* alike good.

7 Truly the light *is* sweet,

And a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes ⁱ to behold the sun :

8 But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all ;

¹ Heb. *upon the face of the waters.*

² Heb. *shall be right.*

XI. There ought to be no division between x. 20 and xi. 1.

1, 2. As if in contrast to the self-indulgence described in x. 16-19, the opposite virtue, readiness to give to others, is inculcated. The use of the word "bread" in both x. 19 (see note) and xi. 1 points the contrast.

1. The verse means, "Shew hospitality, even though the corresponding return of hospitality to you seem improbable; yet be hospitable in faith." Cp. Luke xiv. 13, 14; Heb. xiii. 2. Some interpreters not unreasonably understand by "bread" the seed from the produce of which bread is made. Seed cast upon the fertile soil flooded by the early rains would be returned to the sower in autumn with large increase.

2. The verse means, "Let your hospitality and your alms be extensive: for you know not what reverses may befall either that person who by your liberality will be strengthened to meet them, or yourself who may come to need grateful friends." Cp. Luke xvi. 9.

seven, and also to eight] A definite number for an indefinite (cp. marg. ref.).

3-6. "Unforeseen events come from God; and the man who is always gazing on the uncertain future will neither begin nor complete any useful work: but do thou bear in mind that times and circumstances, the powers of nature and the results to which

they minister, are in the hand of God; and be both diligent and trustful." The images are connected chiefly with the occupation of an agricultural labourer: the discharge of rain from the cloud, and the inclination of the falling tree, and the direction of the wind, are beyond his control, though the result of his work is affected by them. The common application of the image of the fallen tree to the state of departed souls was probably not in the mind of the inspired writer.

5. *spirit*] The same Hebrew word (like *Pneuma* in Greek and *Ghost* in English) signifies both the wind (*v.* 4) and the Spirit (cp. marg. ref.). The Old Testament in many places recognizes the special operation of God (Job x. 8-12; Ps. cxxxix. 13-16; Jer. i. 5), and distinctly of the Spirit of God (Job xxxi. 15) in the origination of every child. Cp. Gen. ii. 7.

7-xii. 7. The preceding exhortation to a life of labour in the sight of God is now addressed specially to the active and the young; and is enforced by another consideration, namely, the transitory character of all that sustains youth.

7. *the light, . . . the sun*] Gifts of God which cheer man's toil, but which he almost ceases to appreciate in his old age.

8. *days of darkness*] The time of old age, and perhaps any time of sorrow or misfortune. Cp. xii. 2.

Yet let him remember the days of darkness ;

- For they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ;

And let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,

• And walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes :

But know thou, that for all these things ^kGod will bring thee into judgment.

10 Therefore remove ^lsorrow from thy heart,

And ^lput away evil from thy flesh :

^mFor childhood and youth are vanity.

CHAP. 12. REMEMBER ^anow thy Creator in the days of thy youth,

While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh,

^bWhen thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them ;

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened,

Nor the clouds return after the rain :

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,

And the strong men shall bow themselves,

And ²the grinders cease because they are few,

And those that look out of the windows be darkened,

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets,

When the sound of the grinding is low,

And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird,

And all ^gthe daughters of musick shall be brought low ;

¹ Or, *anger*.

² Or, *the grinders fail, because they grind little*.

^l Num. 15. 39.

^k ch. 12. 14. Rom. 2. 6. —11.

² 2 Cor. 7. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 22. —9. 5.

^a Prov. 22. 6. Lam. 3. 27.

^b See 2 Sam. 19. 35.

^c 2 Sam. 19. 35.

All that cometh] i.e. "The future," which must not be reckoned on by the active man, as if his present state of healthy energy were to continue.

9. *Rejoice...cheer...walk*] The imperative mood is used to encourage one who possesses certain gifts from God to remember that they come from God and are to be used in accordance with His will.

in the ways &c.] The words are probably used in an innocent sense (ii. 10; Prov. xvi. 9).

judgment] This includes a judgment beyond the grave; though the writer's view of it was dim and indefinite if compared with a Christian's.

10. The sense appears to be, "Let the timely recollection of God's judgment, and of the fleeting character of youth, so influence your conduct that you will refrain from acts which entail future remorse and pain."

XII. 1. *Remember now*] Rather, **And remember**. The connexion between this verse and the preceding one is unfortunately interrupted by our division of chapters.

Creator] Gratitude to God as Creator is here inculcated, as just previously (xi. 9) fear of God as Judge. Godliness, acquired as a habit in youth, is recommended as the proper compensation for that natural cessation of youthful happiness which makes the days

of old age more or less *evil*; more evil in proportion as there is less of godliness in the heart, and less evil where there is more godliness.

while the evil days come not] Rather, **before the evil days come**.

2. *While...not*] Or, **Before**. The darkening of the lights of heaven denotes a time of affliction and sadness. Cp. Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Job iii. 9; Isai. v. 30. Contrast this representation of old age with 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5.

3-6. The body in old age and death is here described under the figure of a decaying house with its inmates and furniture.

3. This verse is best understood as referring to the change which old age brings to four parts of the body, the arms ("the keepers"), the legs ("the strong men"), the teeth ("the grinders"), and the eyes.

4. *And the doors...is low*] The house is viewed from without. The way of entry and exit is stopped: little or no sound issues forth to tell of life stirring within. The old man as he grows older has less in common with the rising generation; mutual interest and intercourse decline. Some take the doors and the sound of the mill as figures of the lips and ears and of the speech.

he shall rise &c.] Here the metaphor of the house passes out of sight. The verb **may**

- 5 Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high,
And fears *shall be* in the way,
And the almond tree shall flourish,
And the grasshopper shall be a burden;
And desire shall fail:

^d Job 17. 13.
^e Jer. 9. 17.

Because man goeth to 'his long home, and 'the 'mourners go about the streets:

- 6 Or over the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken,
Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

^f Gen. 3. 19.
Job 34. 15.
Ps. 90. 3.
^g ch. 3. 21.
^h Num. 16. 22.

- 7 ^fThen shall the dust return to the earth as it was:
^gAnd the spirit shall return unto God ^hwho gave it.

- 8 'Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all *is* vanity.

- 9 And ¹moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out,
10 and ^kset in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out ²acceptable words: and *that which was written was* upright,

ⁱ Ps. 62. 9.
ch. 1. 2.
^k 1 Kin. 4. 32.

¹ Or, *the more wise the preacher was, &c.*

² Heb. *words of delight.*

either be taken impersonally (= "they shall rise," compare the next verse): or as definitely referring to an old man, who as the master of the house rises out of sleep at the first sound in the morning.

all the daughters of music] i.e. Singing women (ii. 8).

be brought low] i.e. Sound faintly in the ears of old age.

5. *high*] The powerful and the proud, such persons as an old man in his timidity might shrink from opposing or meeting: or, high ground which old men would avoid ascending.

fears...in the way] Cp. Prov. xxvi. 13.

the almond tree] The type of old age. Many modern critics translate "The almond shall be despised," i.e. pleasant food shall be no longer relished.

the grasshopper] Rather, *the locust*. The clause means, heaviness and stiffness shall take the place of that active motion for which the locust is conspicuous.

desire] Lit. *the caper-berry*; which, eaten as a provocative to appetite, shall fail to take effect on a man whose powers are exhausted.

long home] Lit. "eternal (see i. 4 note) house;" man's place in the next world. Without attributing to the author of Ecclesiastes that deep insight into the future life which is shewn by the writer of the Epistles to the Corinthians, we may observe that He by Whom both writers were inspired sanctions in both Books (see 2 Cor. v. 1-6) the use of the same expression "eternal house." In 2 Cor. it means that spiritual body which shall be hereafter; and it is placed, as it is here (see v. 3), in contrast with that earthly dissolving house which clothes the spirit of man in this world.

mourners] The singing women who attend funerals for hire (see Matt. ix. 23).

6. *be loosed*] The termination of life is signified generally by the snapping of the silver cord by which the lamp hangs from the ceiling; by the dashing in pieces of the cup or reservoir of oil; by the shattering of the pitcher used to bring water from the spring; and by the breaking of the wheel by which a bucket is let down into the well. Others discern in the silver cord, the soul which holds the body in life; in the bowl, the body; and in the golden oil (cp. Zech. iv. 12) within it, the spirit.

the spirit] i.e. The spirit separated unto God from the body at death. No more is said here of its future destiny. To return to God, Who is the fountain (Ps. xxxvi. 9) of Life, certainly means to continue to live. The doctrine of life after death is implied here as in Exod. iii. 6 (cp. Mark xii. 26), Ps. xvii. 15 (see note), and in many other passages of Scripture earlier than the age of Solomon. The inference that the soul loses its personality and is absorbed into something else has no warrant in this or any other statement in this Book, and would be inconsistent with the announcement of a judgment after death (v. 14).

8-14. This passage is properly regarded as the Epilogue of the whole Book; a kind of apology for the obscurity of many of its sayings. The passage serves therefore to make the Book more intelligible and more acceptable.

Here, as in the beginning of the Book (i. 1, 2), the Preacher speaks of himself (vv. 8, 9, 10) in the third person. He first repeats (v. 8) the mournful, perplexing theme with which his musings began (i. 2); and then states the encouraging practical conclusion (vv. 13, 14) to which they have led him. It

- 11 *even* words of *truth*. The words of the wise *are as goads*, and
 • as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given
 12 from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admon-
 ished: of making many books *there is no end*; and 'much study is a weariness of the flesh. ' ch. 1. 18.
- 13 ¹Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: ²"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. ³For "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.
- ¹ Or, ²reading.
² Or, *The end of the matter,*
 even all that hath been heard, is.
- ³ Dent. 6. 2. & 10. 12.
 " ch. 11. 9.
 Matt. 12. 36.
 Acts 17. 30, 31.
 Rom. 2. 16.
 1 Cor. 4. 5.

has been pointed out that the Epilogue assumed the identity of the Preacher with the writer of the Book of Proverbs.

11. Lit. **Words of wise men are as goads, and as nails driven in (by) masters of assemblies; they are given from one shepherd:** "goads," because they rouse the hearer and impel him to right actions; "nails" (perhaps tent-spikes), because they remain fixed in the memory: "masters of assemblies" are simply "teachers" or "preachers" (see i. 1 note), instructors of such assemblies as Wisdom addresses (Prov. i. 20).

one shepherd] i.e. GOD, Who is the supreme Giver of wisdom (Prov. ii. 6), and the chief Shepherd (Jer. xxiii. 1-4). Cp. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

12. *by these*] i.e. "By the words of wise men."

books] Rather, "Writings." Probably the proverbs current in the Preacher's age, including, though not specially indicating, his own.

The Preacher protests against the folly of protracted, unprofitable, meditation.

13. Lit. "The conclusion of the discourse" (or "word," = words, i. 1), "the whole, let us hear."

the whole duty of man] Rather, **the whole man.** To fear God and to obey Him is the whole man, constitutes man's whole being; that only is conceded to Man; all other things, as this Book again and again teaches, are dependent on a Higher Incomprehensible Being.

14. *judgment with*] Rather, judgment (*which shall be held*) **upon &c.:** i.e., an appointed judgment which shall take place in another world, as distinct from that retribution which frequently follows man's actions in the course of this world, and which is too imperfect (cp. ii. 15, iv. 1, vii. 15, ix. 2 &c.) to be described by these expressions. He that is fully convinced that there is no solid happiness to be found in this world, and that there is a world to come wherein God will adjudge men to happiness or misery respectively, as they have made their choice and acted here, must necessarily subscribe to the truth of Solomon's conclusion, that true religion is the only way to true happiness.



THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

INTRODUCTION.

1. "THE Song of Songs which is Solomon's," so designated by its most ancient (Hebrew) title, holds an unique position in sacred literature. It may be said to be the enigma of the Old Testament, as the Apocalypse is of the New.

The Song was regarded as an integral and venerated portion of the Hebrew canon before the commencement of the Christian era, and passed as such into the canon of the primitive Church: it has been always held both by the Church and by the Synagogue in the highest and most reverent estimation.¹

One or two allusions have been found in the Song to at least one older canonical Book (Genesis); and a few references to it occur in Books of later composition (Proverbs, Isaiah, Hosea); while two or three doubt-

ful allusions have been thought to be made to it by writers of the New Testament. These references are sufficient to establish the recognition of the Song as a part of Holy Scripture by some among the canonical writers.

2. The difficulties of the interpreter of the Song are unusually great. One lies in the peculiar form of composition. The Song of Songs might be called a lyrico-dramatic poem, but it is not a drama in the sense that it was either intended or adapted for representation.

Though the Song is a well-organized poetical whole, its unity² is made up of various parts and sections, of which several have so much independence and individuality as to have been not inaptly called Idylls, i.e. short poetic pieces of various forms containing each

¹ Rabbi Akiba as reported in the Mishnah, expressing the general judgment of Jewish schools and doctors in the first and second centuries, exclaimed: "No man in Israel ever doubted the canonicity of the Song of Songs, for the course of ages cannot vie with the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; all the Kethubim (Hagiographa) are indeed a holy thing, but the Song of Songs is a holy of holies." Origen, after enumerating six of the chief songs of Holy Scripture, *e.g.*, the songs of the Red Sea (Exod. xv.), of the Well (Num. xxi. 17, 18), of Moses (Deut. xxxii.), of Deborah (Judg. v.), of David (Ps. xviii.), of Isaiah (Isai. v.), and assigning to each its special significance in reference to the spiritual life, thus proceeds: "When thou hast passed

through all these, thou must mount yet higher to sing with the Bridegroom this Song of Songs." In the Book of Proverbs, according to St. Jerome, the young are taught the duties of life; in Ecclesiastes the middle-aged the vanity of earthly things; in the Song of Songs the perfected, who have the world beneath their feet, are joined to the embraces of the heavenly Bridegroom.

² Almost all recent critics now assume that the Song is not an anthology or collection of poems and fragments by various authors, but (as its Hebrew title indicates) a single poem, the work of one author. The old popular renderings of this title, "Cantica," "Canticles," or "Songs of Solomon," were consequently—as to the plural form—inexact and misleading.

a distinct subject of representation. These shorter pieces are all, however, so closely linked by a common purpose, as to form, when viewed in their right connexion, constituent parts of a larger and complete poem.

The earliest Jewish expositor of the Song as a whole, the author of the so-called Chaldee Targum, divides it in his historico-prophetic interpretation into two nearly equal halves at v. 1. All that precedes the close of that verse he makes refer to the times of the Exodus and of the first Temple, and all that follows to times subsequent to the deportation to Babylon down to the final restoration of Israel and the glories of the latter day. Whatever we may think of this allegorical interpretation, the division itself may, with other divisions—suggested by refrains and recurrent phrases, used it would seem of set purpose to indicate the commencement or the close of various sections,—prove a valuable clue to the true significance of the whole.

The two most important of these refrains are, first, the bride's three-fold adjuration to the Chorus (ii. 7, iii. 5, and viii. 4), marking at each place, as most interpreters agree, the close of one division of the poem; secondly, the question asked three times by a Chorus on as many distinct appearances of the bride (iii. 6, vi. 10, and viii. 5), marking, in like manner, a fresh commencement. These two refrains enable us to divide each half of the Song into three parts of nearly equal length, and make the whole poem consist of six parts; an arrangement which, in its main features, has obtained a majority of

suffrages among modern interpreters.³

The Song is throughout so far dramatic in form that it consists entirely of dialogue or monologue, the writer nowhere speaking in his own person; and the dialogue is connected with the development of a certain action. There are, we believe, only three chief speakers, "the bride," "the beloved," and a Chorus of "virgins" or "daughters of Jerusalem," having each their own manner and peculiar words and phrases, and these so carefully adhered to as to help us, in some cases of doubt, to determine the particular speaker (see i. 8 note)⁴.

If in other Scriptures are found words of indignation and wrath

³ Each of these parts, on a closer view, will be found to break up into two or three smaller sections, some quite idyllic in their character, and capable of being regarded as distinct little poems (*e.g.* ii. 8-17, iii. 1-5, v. 2-8). Here occur other recurrent phrases, *e.g.* "Behold, thou art fair" &c. (i. 15, iv. 1, 7, vi. 4, vii. 6), which is a formula of commencement; and the following formulæ of conclusion, "His left hand underneath my head" &c. (ii. 6, viii. 3); "Flee, my beloved" &c.; and "I am my beloved's" &c. (ii. 16, 17, vii. 10, viii. 14).

⁴ Origen adds a fourth speaker, a Chorus of young men, companions of the bridegroom (iii. 11). The bride constantly repeats her favourite phrases; *e.g.* the adjuration (ii. 7 &c., v. 8); "I am my beloved's" &c. (ii. 16, vi. 3, vii. 10, cp. viii. 10); "Flee (or "turn") my beloved," &c. (ii. 17, viii. 14); her beloved is a "shepherd" who "feeds" his flock (i. 7) "among lilies" (ii. 16, vi. 3). The beloved repeatedly employs the same terms in addressing the bride; *e.g.* "My love" or "friend" (i. 9, 15, ii. 2, 10, 13, iv. 1, 7, v. 2, vi. 4); "My dove" (ii. 14, v. 2, vi. 9); "My sister" (iv. 9, 10, v. 2); "Let me hear thy voice" (ii. 14, viii. 13); "Thou hast doves' eyes" (i. 15, iv. 1). Cp. also iv. 1-3 with vi. 5-7, and iv. 4, 5, with vii. 3, 4.

and terrible threatenings, the characteristics of this Book are sweetness, cheerfulness, and joy, characteristics somewhat at variance with "the hypothesis" so-called "of the shepherd lover."⁵ According to the view taken in this Commentary, there is but one lover in the Song, and one object of his affection, without rival or disturbing influence on either side. The beloved of the bride is in truth a king, and if she occasionally speaks of him as a shepherd, she intimates (vi. 2, 3) that she is speaking figuratively. Being herself a rustic maiden of comparatively lowly station she, by such an appellation, seeks to draw down him "whom her soul loveth" (i. 7, iii. 1-4), though he be the king of Israel, within her narrower circle of thoughts and aspirations. And, therefore, while the whole poem breathes of almost more than regal splendour and magnificence, the bride is nowhere represented as dwelling with any pride or satisfaction on the riches or grandeur of her beloved, but only on what he is to her in his own person as "chiefest among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely" (v. 10, 16 notes).

3. Most recent critics have agreed in assigning to the Song an early date.

The diction of the Song (on the character of which several critics

have insisted when arguing for a later date) is unquestionably peculiar. The poem is written in pure Hebrew of the best age, but with a large sprinkling of uncommon idioms and some very remarkable and apparently foreign words. Diction apart, most of the references and allusions in the Song would lead us to assign it, in accordance with its title, to the age of Solomon, nor does there seem to be sufficient reason for departing from the traditional belief that Solomon was himself the author; unless it be considered a panegyric composed in his honour by a prophet or poet of the king's own circle. In that case some of the peculiarities of diction and phraseology might be accounted for by assuming the author to have been a native of the Northern part of Solomon's dominions.

One striking characteristic of the writer of the Song is a love of natural scenes and objects, and familiarity with them as they would be presented, in the wide area⁶ of the Hebrew monarchy, to an observant eye in the age of Solomon. Thus it has been observed that this short poem contains 18 names of plants and 13 of animals. Not less delight is exhibited in the enumeration of those works of human art and labour and those articles of commerce, which in the time of Solo-

⁵ This hypothesis, held by many distinguished critics, assumes that there are two lovers in the Song, one a faithful simple-minded shepherd, the other a magnificent voluptuous king, by each of whom the affections of a Shulamite maiden are alternately solicited; while she, faithful in her allegiance to her shepherd-lover, rejects with scorn the monarch's blandishments, and finally compels him to abandon his pursuit.

⁶ Thus, allusions to the north of Palestine, in which the writer seems to take particular delight, are found in iv. 8, 11, 15, i. 16, 17. Allusions to the east of Jordan occur in ii. 17, iv. 1, vi. 5, 13; and allusions to the fields and valleys, the flowers and animals, on the west of the river in ii. 1, 12, 14, iv. 5, v. 12, vii. 13; The furthest south is alluded to in i. 14, iv. 4, 6, 12-14, vi. 4, vii. 4 &c.

mon so largely ministered to royal pomp and luxury.⁷

The time in which the Song was written was unquestionably one of peace and general prosperity, such as occurred but very rarely in the chequered history of Israel. All the indications named above concur with this in fixing that time as the age of Solomon.

4. The interpretation of the Song of Songs followed in this Commentary proceeds on the assumption that the primary subject and occasion of the poem was a real historical event, of which we have here the only record, the marriage union of Solomon with a shepherd-maiden of northern Palestine, by whose beauty and nobility of soul the great king had been captivated. Starting from this historical basis, the Song of Songs is in its essential character an ideal representation of human love in the relation of marriage (viii. 6, 7).⁸

5. According to this literal and historical interpretation, Parts I.—III. constitute the first half or one main division of the Poem, which may be called: THE BRIDE AND

HER ESPOUSALS WITH THE KING (i. 2—v. 1). The three parts represent each a different scene and distinct action.

Part I. THE BRIDE IN THE KING'S CHAMBERS (i. 2—ii. 7) subdivisible into four sections, corresponding to so many pauses in the action or dialogue.⁹

The scene is laid apparently in a wooded district of northern Palestine near the bride's home, where the king is spending part of the summer season in tents. The three chief speakers of the poem are now introduced in succession: first, A female Chorus (the "daughters of Jerusalem") commence by singing a short ode of two stanzas in praise of the absent king (i. 2—4). The next speaker, the Shulamite maiden ("the bride"), appears to have been recently brought from her country home to the king's pavilion, to be there affianced to him. A brief dialogue ensues between her and the Chorus (i. 5—7). The king himself appears, in the third place, and commending the beauty of the bride, receives from her in return words of praise and affection (i. 16, ii. 7). Throughout

⁷ *E.g.* the tower of Lebanon (vii. 4), David's tower in Jerusalem (iv. 4), rings and jewels (v. 14), crowns and necklaces (iii. 11, i. 10), palanquins and chariots (iii. 7, 9, i. 9), pillars of marble (v. 15), and every kind of spice and costly perfume (iv. 6, 14, i. 12, 13).

⁸ The allegorical method of interpretation depicts the Song to have been in its original purpose an ideal representation of the Communion of love between the Holy One and His Church as first exhibited in the election of Israel, not following, however, any actual developments of that relation in the changing fortunes of the chosen people, but representing (in accordance with the ideal truth of things) any transient disturbance of communion as resulting in the drawing of a closer bond. This is thought to be done by

means of a succession of lyrico-dramatic songs, and under the allegory of the bridal love of the Shulamite and Solomon. The whole conception is thus based on the image referred to in Ex. xxxiv. 14 &c., and Lev. xxvi. 5 &c. (cp. Ex. xx. 5; Lev. xviii. 7; Num. xiv. 33; Deut. xxxii. 16, 31). That such a conception should suddenly spring up in the mind or age of Solomon into this full and vigorous life, is considered possible when the analogous development of the "Chokmah" (or Hebrew Philosophy) in the same generation, is considered and compared with Pss. xlv. and lxxii. which equally belong to it.

⁹ 1. "The Prologue" (i. 2—4); 2. "The bride and the daughters of Jerusalem" (i. 5—8); 3. "The entrance of the king" (i. 9—14); 4. "The bride and the beloved" (i. 15—ii. 7).

this part the bride is represented as of inferior rank to him whom she calls her "beloved," shrinking at times from the splendours of the royal station that awaits her. She speaks of him both as a shepherd and as a king; but, in either character, as of one in whose favour and society she finds supreme satisfaction and entire rest. It is a day of early love, but not that of their first meeting.

Part II. MONOLOGUES OF THE BRIDE (ii. 8-iii. 5), comprising two sections.¹ This part carries us back to an earlier period than the former, and affords a glance at the previous history of the Shulamite in her relations to the king. She describes to the Chorus in two monologues how the beloved had visited her on a spring morning, and how she had afterwards dreamed of him at night.

Part III. ROYAL ESPOUSALS (iii. 6-v. 1), subdivisible into three sections.² The scene changes to Jerusalem, whither the bride is brought in royal state to be united to the king in marriage.

Parts IV.-VI. THE BRIDE THE KING'S WIFE (v. 2-viii. 14). The once lowly Shulamite, though now sharing with her beloved the high places of Israel, yet retains that sweetness, humility, and devoted affection, which in other scenes and circumstances had gained his heart. She invites him to revisit with her rural scenes, and share once more their simple pleasures (vii. 11-13).

Part IV. SEEKING AND FINDING

(v. 2-vi. 9) may be divided into three sections.³ The scene of this part is still Jerusalem. The bride after relating to the chorus a second dream concerning her beloved, pours forth a stream of richest fancies in his praise, who, as she complains, has departed from her. The Chorus offering to aid her in her search of him, suddenly the beloved reappears and gives in his turn the noblest commendations to the bride.

Part V. HOMEWARD THOUGHTS (vi. 10-viii. 4), subdivisible into four sections.⁴ The scene is still Jerusalem, or a palace-garden in the neighbourhood; but the bride's thoughts are now reverting to her northern home. She relates how in early spring she had first met the king in a walnut-garden in her own country. The Chorus ask her to perform a sacred dance seemingly well known to the bride and her country-folk. The bride complies, and while she is dancing and the Chorus are singing some stanzas in her praise, the king himself appears. The bride invites him to return with her into the country and to her mother's house.

Part VI. THE RETURN HOME (viii. 5-14), containing three very brief sections.⁵ The scene changes to the bride's birthplace, to which she has now returned with the

¹ 1. "The visit of the beloved" (ii. 8-17); 2. "The bride's first dream" (iii. 1-5).

² 1. "Bridal procession and royal entry" (iii. 6-11); 2. "The bridegroom's commendation of the bride" (iv. 1-7); 3. "The king's invitation" (iv. 8-v. 1). •

³ 1. "The bride's second dream" (v. 2-8); 2. "The bride's commendation of the beloved" (v. 9-vi. 3); 3. "The beloved's commendation of the bride" (vi. 4-9).

⁴ 1. "The Shulamite" (vi. 10-13); 2. "The dance of Mahanaim" (vii. 1-5); 3. "The king and the bride" (vii. 6-10); 4. "The bride's invitation" (vii. 11-viii. 4).

⁵ 1. "Last vows sealed" (viii. 5-7); 2. "The bride's intercession" (viii. 8-12); 3. "The Epilogue" (viii. 13, 14).

king. The bride commends her brothers to the good graces of the king, and ends, at his request, by charming his ear with one last song, recalling to his memory a strain of other days (see viii. 14 note).

The history, which forms its groundwork is, however, throughout the poem, contemplated from an ideal point of view; and the fundamental idea expressed and illustrated is the awful all-constraining, the at once levelling and elevating power of the mightiest and most universal of human affections. The refrains and phrases, to which allusion has been already made, give expression at regular intervals to this idea.⁶

The ideal character of the whole poem is further evidenced by the way in which the chief points whereon the action turns are indicated;⁷ and it will be found that the two halves, or main divisions of the Song have throughout numerous well-balanced contrasts and correspondences.⁸

These and other peculiarities,

⁶ *E.g.* ii. 7, iii. 5, viii. 4, 7; vii. 6; viii. 6.

⁷ *E.g.* The question of the Chorus (iii. 6, vi. 10, viii. 5).

⁸ In the one the bride ascends to Jerusalem and at the king's invitation remains with him there, in the other at her request he returns with her to Shunem; in the one, the beloved seeks and wins the bride, in the other she seeks and obtains her will from him; in the one he claims her self-surrender, in the other she demands his vow of fidelity. In the first half of the Song the Chorus sing the praise of the king, in the second they celebrate the beauty of the bride and her triumph over him. Finally, in each of these main divisions the bride relates to her companions a significant dream in order more fully to express her feelings towards the beloved (iii. 1-5, v. 2-8), and in each she sings at his request a strain of peculiar import which seems to have a special music for his ear (ii. 17, viii. 14).

which impart to the Song of Songs its unique and enigmatical character, seem chiefly due to its idealizing treatment of an actual history felt at the time, and especially by the writer, to be profoundly interesting and significant.

Further, that the history thus idealized and the form in which it is presented have meanings beyond themselves and point to something higher, has ever been a deep-seated conviction in the mind both of the Church and of the Synagogue.

The two axes, so to speak, on which the main action of the poem appears alternately to revolve, may be found in the king's invitation to the bride on bringing her to Jerusalem (iv. 8), and in the bride's to the king in recalling him to Shunem (vii. 11-13, viii. 2); in these two invitations and their immediate consequences—the willing obedience of the bride and the ready condescension of the king, the first surrender on her part and the final vow on his—the writer of the Song seems to have intended to exhibit the two-fold energy, both for elevation and abasement, of that affection, to the delineation of which his work is dedicated. The omnipotent, transforming, and yet conserving power of faithful love is here seen in like yet diverse operation in the two personalities through whom it is exhibited. In the case of the bride we see the lowly rejoicing in unforeseen elevation without loss of virginal simplicity, in that of the beloved the highest is made happy through self-abasement without compromise of kingly honour.

It is then no mere fancy, which for so many ages past has been wont to find in the pictures and

melodies of the Song of Songs types and echoes of the actings and emotions of the highest Love, of Love Divine, in its relations to Humanity. Christians may trace in the noble and gentle history thus presented foreshadowings of the infinite condescensions of Incarnate Love;—that Love which, first stooping in human form to visit us

in our low estate in order to seek out and win its object (Pa. cxxxvi. 23), and then raising along with itself a sanctified Humanity to the Heavenly Places (Eph. ii. 6), is finally awaiting there an invitation from the mystic Bride to return to earth once more and seal the Union for Eternity (Rev. xxii. 17).

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

^a 1 Kin. 4. 32. **CHAP. 1. THE** "song of songs, which is Solomon's.

^b ch. 4. 10. 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.
^b For ¹thy love is better than wine.

3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments
Thy name is as ointment poured forth,
Therefore do the virgins love thee.

^c Hos. 11. 4. 4 ^cDraw me, ^dwe will run after thee:
John 6. 44. The king ^ehath brought me into his chambers:
& 12. 32. We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
^d Phil. 3. 12, We will remember thy love more than wine:
13, 14. ^e The upright love thee.
^e Ps. 45. 14, 15.

John 14. 2. 5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
Eph. 2. 6. As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

6 Look not upon me, because I am black,
Because the sun hath looked upon me:
My mother's children were angry with me;
They made me the keeper of the vineyards;

¹ Heb. *thy loves*.

² Or, *they love thee uprightly*.

I. 1. The "Song of songs," *i.e.* the best or most excellent of songs.

which is Solomon's] Literally, "to" or "for Solomon," *i.e.* belonging to Solomon as its author or concerning him as its subject. In a title or inscription, the former interpretation is to be preferred.

FIRST PART. I. 2—II. 7.

2-4. THE PROLOGUE. — The Song commences with two stanzas in praise of the king (now absent) by a Chorus of virgins belonging to the royal household. Expositors, Jewish and Christian, interpret the whole as spoken by the Church of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

2. *Let him kiss me*] Christian expositors have regarded this as a prayer of the Church under the old Covenant for closer communion with the Godhead through the Incarnation. Thus St. Gregory, "Every precept of Christ received by the Church is as one of His kisses."

thy love] Better as margin, *i.e.* thy endearments or tokens of affection are more desired than any other delights.

3. *Because &c.*] Better, **For fragrance are thine ointments good**, making with the clause that follows two steps of a climax: "thy perfumes are good, thy name the best of all perfumes." "Ointments" here are unguents or fragrant oils largely used for anointing at entertainments (cp. Ps. xxiii. 5; Luke vii. 46; John xii. 3).

thy name—poured forth] As unguents are

the sweeter for diffusion, so the king's name the wider it is known.

4. *the king hath brought me*] Made me a member of his household. This is true of every member of the Chorus as well as of the bride.

the upright love thee] Better as in marg., **uprightly do they** (*i.e.* "the virgins" of v. 3) **love thee**. (cp. the use of the same word in Ps. lviii. 1; Prov. xxiii. 31.)

5-8. This section is made by the Targumist and other Jewish interpreters to adumbrate the condition of Israel in the wilderness; by some Christian expositors, that of the Gentile Church on her first conversion.

5. *I am black &c.*] Dark-hued, as the tents of Kedar with their black goats' hair coverings, rough and weather-stained, "but comely" (beautiful) as the rich hangings which adorn the pavilion of Solomon. Kedar was the name of an Arab tribe (Gen. xxv. 13; Ps. cxx. 5). The word itself signifies "dark" or "black." Possibly "tents of Kedar" stand here poetically for shepherds' tents in general (Isai. lx. 7).

6. *Look not upon me*] In wonder or scorn at my **swarthy** hue. It was acquired in enforced but honest toil: **the sun hath scanned me** (or "glared upon me") with his burning eye.^c The second word rendered "looked" is a word twice found in Job (xx. 2; xxviii. 7), and indicates in the latter place the piercing glance of a bird of prey.

But mine own vineyard have I not kept.

7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,
Where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon:

For why should I be 'as one that turneth aside by the flocks of
thy companions?

8 If thou know not, 'O thou fairest among women,
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

/ ch. 5. 9.
& 6. 1.

9 I have compared thee, 'O my love,
To a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

σ ch. 2. 2, 10,
13.

10 'Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels,
Thy neck with chains of gold.

& 4. 1, 7.
& 5. 2.
& 6. 4.

11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.

John 15. 14,
15.

12 While the king sitteth at his table,
My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

h 2 Chr. 1.
16, 17.

13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me;
He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

' Ezek. 16.
11, 12, 13.

¹ Or, as one that is veiled.

my mother's children] Or, *sons*; a more affectionate designation than "brothers," and implying the most intimate relationship. *angry*] This anger was perhaps but a form of jealous care for their sister's safety (cp. viii. 12). By engaging her in rustic labours they preserved her from idleness and temptation, albeit with a temporary loss of outward comeliness.

mine own vineyard] A figurative expression for herself or her beauty.

7. *whom my soul loveth*] A phrase recurring several times. It expresses great intensity of affection.

feedest] i.e. "Pursuest thy occupation as a shepherd;" so she speaks figuratively of the Son of David. Cp. ii. 16, vi. 3; Ps. xxiii. 1.

rest] Or, *lie down*; a term properly used of the couching of four-footed animals: "thy flock" is here therefore easily understood. Cp. Ezek. xxxiv. 14, 15; Ps. xxiii. 2; Jer. 1. 6.

as one that turneth aside] Or, *goeth astray* like an outcast.

8. The Chorus, and not the king, are the speakers here. Their meaning seems to be: If thy beloved be indeed a shepherd, then seek him yonder among other shepherds, but if a king, thou wilt find him here in his royal dwelling.

9-14. This and the next (i. 15-ii. 7) sections are regarded by ancient commentators (Jewish and Christian) as expressing "the love of espousals" (Jer. ii. 2) between the Holy One and His Church, first in the wilderness of the Exodus, and then in the wilderness of the world (Ezek. xx. 35, 36).

9. Or, to a mare of mine in the chariots of Pharaoh I liken thee, 'O my friend. (The last word is the feminine form of that rendered "friend" at v. 16.) The comparison of the bride to a beautiful horse is singularly like one in Theocritus, and some

have conjectured that the Greek poet, having read at Alexandria the Septuagint Version of the Song, may have borrowed these thoughts from it. If so, we have here the first instance of an influence of sacred on profane literature. The simile is peculiarly appropriate on the lips, or from the pen, of Solomon, who first brought horses and chariots from Egypt (1 K. x. 28, 29). As applied to the bride it expresses the stately and imposing character of her beauty.

10, 11. *rows...borders*] The same Heb. word in both places; ornaments forming part of the bride's head-dress, probably strings of beads or other ornaments descending on the cheeks. The introduction of "jewels" and "gold" in v. 10 injures the sense and destroys the climax of v. 11, which was spoken by a chorus (hence "we," not "I," as when the king speaks, v. 9). They promise the bride ornaments more worthy and becoming than the rustic attire in which she has already such charms for the king: "Ornaments of gold will we make for thee with studs (or 'points') of silver." The "studs" are little silver ornaments which it is proposed to affix to the golden (cp. Prov. xxv. 12), or substitute for the strung beads of the bride's necklace.

12-14. The bride's reply (v. 12) may mean, "While the king reclines at the banquet I anoint him with my costliest perfume, but he has for me a yet sweeter fragrance" (vv. 13, 14). According to Origen's interpretation, the bride represents herself as anointing the king, like Mary (John xii. 3), with her most precious unguents.

spikenard] An unguent of great esteem in the ancient world, retaining its Indian name in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. It is obtained from an Indian plant now called *jatamansi*.

13. Render: A bag of myrrh is my beloved to me, which lodgeth in my bosom.

14 My beloved *is* unto me *as* a cluster of ¹camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.

^k ch. 4. 1.
[&] 5. 12.

15 ^kBehold, thou *art* fair, ²my love;
Behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes.

16 Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
Also our bed *is* green.

17 The beams of our house *are* cedar,—and our ³rafters of fir.

CHAP. 2. I AM the rose of Sharon,—and the lily ⁴of the valleys.

2 As the lily among thorns,—so *is* my love among the daughters.

3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So *is* my beloved among the sons.

⁴I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
⁵And his fruit *was* sweet to my ⁶taste.

^a Rev. 22.
1, 2.

4 He brought me to the ^abanqueting house,
And his banner over me *was* love.

¹ Or, *cypress*, ch. 4. 13.

² Or, *my companion*.

³ Or, *galleries*.

⁴ Heb. *I delighted and sat down, &c.*

⁵ Heb. *palate*.

⁶ Heb. *house of wine*.

14. *camphire*] Rather, *Copher*, from which "cypsus" is probably derived (in marg. mis-spelt "cypress"), the name by which the plant called by the Arabs *henna* was known to the Greeks and Romans. It is still much esteemed throughout the East for the fragrance of its flowers and the dye extracted from its leaves. Engedi was famous for its vines, and the *henna* may have been cultivated with the vines in the same inclosures.

15.—II. 7. A dialogue ensues between the king and the bride, in which each in succession develops the thought or returns the commendations of the other. Almost every term of praise and endearment here employed may be exactly paralleled by those elsewhere made use of in Scripture to describe the relations of Israel or the Church to the Heavenly Bridegroom.

15. Outward beauty is of course the first here thought of; but this outward fairness is the symbol and accompaniment of an inward beauty indicated in the words *thine eyes are doves*, i.e. innocent, meek, and loving. The bride is herself called "a dove" (ii. 14 and vi. 9), as is the Church of Israel (Ps. lxxiv. 19; cp. Ps. lxxviii. 13).

16. The bride's reply. Cp. Isai. v. 1 and xxxiii. 17, both, perhaps, conscious references to this Song, Isaiah being the only prophet who thus speaks of the Holy One of Israel by the term constantly employed by the bride throughout the Song to designate him "whom her soul loveth."

yea, pleasant] More than corporeally beautiful, full of moral grace and charm (cp. 2 Sam. i. 23; Pss. xxvii. 4, xc. 17). "Christ is beautiful," says Bede, "in His Divinity, pleasant in His Humanity."

our bed is green] The epithet is appropriate for a bank or natural bed of grass and flowers.

17. The king replies, "The tall umbrageous forest-trees shut us in, as we sit together on this grassy bed, like the roof and walls of a many-chambered house, while cypress avenues on every side seem like the long-drawn corridors of a stately palace."

II. 1. The division of the chapters is unfortunate; ch. ii. ought to have begun at i. 15, or ch. i. to have been continued to ii. 7. The bride replies, "And I am like a lovely wild flower springing at the root of the stately forest-trees." The majority of Christian fathers assigned this verse to the king (Christ). Hebrew commentators generally assign it to the bride. It is quite uncertain what flower is meant by the word rendered (here and Isai. xxxv. 1) "rose." The etymology is in favour of its being a bulbous plant [the white narcissus, Conder]. "Sharon" is usually the proper name of the celebrated plain from Joppa to Cæsarea, between the hill-country and the sea, and travellers have remarked the abundance of flowers with which this plain is still carpeted in spring. But in the time of Eusebius and Jerome there was a smaller plain of Sharon (Saron) situated between Mount Tabor and the sea of Tiberias, which would be very near the bride's native home if that were Shunem.

2. The king resumes, taking up the bride's comparison: "As the lily excels in beauty the thorny shrubs among which it grows, so my friend excels her companions."

3-7. The bride's answer: "As the 'tapuach' with its fragrant fruit excels the barren trees of the wild wood, so my beloved his associates and friends &c." "Tapuach" may in early Hebrew have been a generic name for apple, quince, citron, &c. &c.

4. *his banner*] As the standard is the rallying-point and guide of the individual sol-

- 5 Stay me with figs, ¹comfort me with apples:
 • For I *am* sick of love.
 6 ²His left hand *is* under my head,
 And his right hand doth embrace me. ^b ch. 8. 3.
 7 ^{2c}I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
 By the roses, and by the hinds of the field,
 That ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please. ^c ch. 3. 5.
& 8. 4.
 8 The voice of *my* beloved! behold, he cometh
 Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
 9 ^aMy beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
 Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
 He looketh forth at the windows,
³Shewing himself through the lattice. ^d ver. 17.
 10 My beloved spake, and said unto me,
^eRise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. ^e ver. 13.
 11 For, lo, the winter is past,—the rain is over *and* gone;

¹ Heb. *straw me with apples.*

² Heb. *I adjure you.*

³ Heb. *flourishing.*

dier, so the bride, transplanted from a lowly station to new scenes of unwonted splendour, finds support and safety in the known attachment of her beloved. His "love" is her "banner." The thought is similar to that expressed in the name "Jehovah-nissi" (Ex. xvii. 15 note).

5. *figs*] More probably *cakes of raisins* or dried grapes (2 Sam. vi. 19 note; 1 Chr. xvi. 3; Hos. iii. 1). For an instance of the reviving power of dried fruit, see 1 Sam. xxx. 12.

6. Render as a wish or prayer: "O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand did embrace me!" Let him draw me to him with entire affection. Cp. Deut. xxxiii. 27; Prov. iv. 8.

7. Render: *I adjure you...by the gazelles, or by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awaken love until it please.* The A. V., "my love," is misleading. The affection or passion in itself, not its object, is here meant. This adjuration, three times significantly introduced as a concluding formula (marg. reff.), expresses one of the main thoughts of the poem; namely, that genuine love is a shy and gentle affection which dreads intrusion and scrutiny; hence the allusion to the gazelles and hinds, shy and timid creatures.

The complementary thought is that of viii. 6, 7, where love is again described, and by the bride, as a fiery principle.

SECOND PART. II. 8—III. 5.

8-17. The bride relates to the Chorus a visit which the beloved had paid her some time previously in her native home. He on a fair spring morning solicits her company. The bride, immersed in rustic toils, refuses for the present, but confessing her love, bids him return at the cool of day. It is a spring-time of affection which is here

described, still earlier than that of the former chapter, a day of pure first-love, in which, on either side, all royal state and circumstance is forgotten or concealed. Hence, perhaps, the annual recitation of the Song of Songs by the Synagogue with each return of spring, at the Feast of Passover, and special interpretations of this passage by Hebrew doctors, as referring to the paschal call of Israel out of Egypt, and by Christian fathers, as foreshadowing the evangelic mysteries of Easter—Resurrection and Regeneration. The whole scene has also been thought to represent the communion of a newly-awakened soul with Christ, He gradually revealing Himself to her, and bidding her come forth into fuller communion.

8. *voice*] Better, *sound*. Not a voice, but the sound of approaching footsteps is meant (cp. "noise," Isai. xiii. 4).

9. *like a roe*] *Gazelle* (cp. Prov. v. 19 note). The points of comparison here are beauty of form, grace, and speed of movement. In 2 Sam. ii. 18; 1 Chr. xii. 8, princes are compared to "gazelles."

wall] The clay-built wall of the house or vineyard of the bride's family, different from the strong wall of a city or fortress (v. 7, viii. 9, 10).

looketh forth at the windows] The meaning evidently is, that he is looking in at, or through, the window from the outside. Cp. v. 4 note.

shewing himself] Or, peering. Some, taking the marginal rendering, imagine that the radiant face of the beloved is thus compared to some beautiful flower entangled in the lattice-work which protects the opening of the window, whence he gazes down upon the bride.

10-13. *Arise, my friend, my beautiful one, and come away.* The stanza begins

- 12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
- 13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
f ver. 10. f Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
- 14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places
of the stairs,
v ch. 8. 13. Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.
- 15 Take us like the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines:
For our vines have tender grapes.
a Ps. 80. 13. Ezek. 13, 4. Luke 13. 32.
- 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his:—He feedeth among the
lilies.
i ch. 6. 3. & 7. 10.
- 17 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved,
And be thou like a roe or a young hart
Upon the mountains of Bethel.
k ch. 4. 6.
- 18 ver. 9.
ch. 8. 14.
- 19 Is. 26. 9.
- CHAP. 3.** BY night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.
2 I will rise now, and go about the city

¹ Or, of division.

and ends with this refrain, in which the bride reports the invitation of the beloved that she should come forth with him into the open champaign, now a scene of verdure and beauty, and at a time of mirth and mutual affection. The season indicated by six signs (vv 11-13) is that of spring after the cessation of the latter rain in the first or paschal month (Joel ii. 23), i.e. Nisan or Abib, corresponding to the latter part of March and early part of April. Cyril interpreted vv. 11, 12 of our Lord's Resurrection in the spring.

12. *The time of the singing &c.* i.e. The song of pairing birds. This is better than the rendering of the ancient Versions, "the pruning time is come."

13. *The vines &c.* The vines in blossom give forth fragrance. The fragrance of the vine blossom ("semadar"), which precedes the appearance of "the tender grape," is very sweet but transient.

14. *The secret places of the stairs* A hidden nook approached by a zig-zag path. The beloved urges the bride to come forth from her rock-girt home.

15. The bride answers by singing what appears to be a fragment of a vine-dresser's ballad, insinuating the vineyard duties imposed on her by her brethren (i. 6), which prevent her from joining him. The destructive propensities of foxes or jackals in general are referred to, no grapes existing at the season indicated. Allegorical interpretations make these foxes symbolize "false teachers" (cp. Ezek. xiii. 4).

16. *feedeth among the lilies* Pursues his

occupation as a shepherd among congenial scenes and objects of gentleness and beauty.

17. *Until the day break* Or, rather, *until the day breathe*, i.e. until the fresh evening breeze spring up in what is called (Gen. iii. 8) "the cool" or *breathing time of the day*.

and the shadows flee i.e. Lengthen out, and finally lose their outlines with the sinking and departure of the sun (cp. Jer. vi. 4). As the visit of the beloved is most naturally conceived of as taking place in the early morning, and the bride is evidently dismissing him till a later time of day, it seems almost certain that this interpretation is the correct one which makes that time to be evening after sunset. The phrase recurs in iv. 6.

mountains of Bethel If a definite locality, identical with Bitlron, a hilly district on the east side of the Jordan valley (2 Sam. ii. 29), not far from Mahanaim (vi. 13 marg.). If used in a symbolical sense, mountains of "separation," dividing for a time the beloved from the bride. This interpretation seems to be the better, though the local reference need not be abandoned.

III. 1-5. The bride relates to the Chorus what appears to be an imaginary occurrence transacted in a dream (like that of v. 2-8). The Targum takes this section to be typical of the wanderings of Israel after the Holy One in the wilderness, as the next (vv. 6-11) is made to represent their entrance into the land.

1. *By night* i.e. In the night-hours.

- In the streets, and in the broad ways
I will seek him whom my soul loveth :
I sought him, but I found him not,
3 ^b The watchmen that go about the city found me : ^b ch. 5. 7.
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?
4 ^a It was but a little that I passed from them,
But I found him whom my soul loveth :
I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.
5 ^c I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field, ^c ch. 2. 7.
That ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please. ^d 8. 4.
6 ^d Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of ^d ch. 8. 5.
smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant ?
7 Behold his bed, which is Solomon's ;
Threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.
8 They all hold swords, being expert in war :
Every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the
night.
9 King Solomon made himself ¹ a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.
10 He made the pillars thereof of silver,
The bottom thereof of gold,—the covering of it of purple,
The midst thereof being paved with love,
For the daughters of Jerusalem.

¹ Or, a bed.

3. the city] One near the bride's native home, possibly Shunem.

4. I held him] This begins the fourth stanza. The bride's mother is mentioned again in vi. 9, and viii. 2.

5. See ii. 7 note.

THIRD PART.—III. 6-V. 1.

The principal and central action of the Song; the bride's entry into the city of David, and her marriage there with the king. Jewish interpreters regard this part of the poem as symbolizing the "first" entrance of the Church of the Old Testament into the land of promise, and her spiritual espousals, and communion with the King of kings, through the erection of Solomon's Temple and the institution of its acceptable worship. Christian Fathers, in a like spirit, make most things here refer to the espousals of the Church with Christ in the Passion and Resurrection, or the communion of Christian souls with Him in meditation thereon.

6-11. Two or more citizens of Jerusalem, or the Chorus of youths, companions of the bridegroom, describe the magnificent appearance of the bride borne in a royal litter, and then that of the king in festive joy wearing a nuptial crown.

6. "Wilderness" is here pasture-land in

contrast with the cultivated districts and garden-enclosures round the city. Cp. Jer. xxiii. 10; Joel ii. 22; Isai. xlii. 11; Ps. lxxv. 12.

pillars of smoke] Here an image of delight and pleasure. Frankincense and other perfumes are burned in such abundance round the bridal equipage that the whole procession appears from the distance to be one of moving wreaths and columns of smoke.

all powders of the merchant] Every kind of spice forming an article of commerce.

7. bed] Probably the royal litter or palanquin in which the bride is borne, surrounded by his own body-guard consisting of sixty mighties of the mighty men of Israel.

8. because of fear in the night] i.e. Against night alarms. Cp. Ps. xci. 5.

9, 10. A stately bed hath king Solomon made for himself of woods (or trees) of the Lebanon. The word rendered "bed" occurs nowhere else in Scripture, and is of doubtful etymology and meaning. It may denote here (1) the bride's car or litter; or (2) a more magnificent vehicle provided for her reception on her entrance into the city, and in which perhaps the king goes forth to meet her. It has been made under Solomon's own directions of the costliest woods (ceda and pine) of the Lebanon; it is furnished with "pillars of silver" supporting

- 11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion,
And behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother
crowned him
In the day of his espousals,
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

- ^a ch. 1. 15. **CHAP. 4. BEHOLD,** ^athou art fair, my love; behold, ^fthou art fair;
^a & 5. 12. Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks:
^b ch. 6. 5. Thy hair is as a ^bflock of goats, ¹that appear from mount
Gilead.
^c ch. 6. 6. 2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which
came up from the washing;
Whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.
3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely:
^d ch. 6. 7. Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.
^e ch. 7. 4. 4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded ^ffor an armoury,
^f Neh. 3. 19. Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty
men.
^g See Prov. 5. 19. 5 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins,
Which feed among the lilies.
^h ch. 7. 3. 6 Until the day ²break, and the shadows flee away,
^h ch. 2. 17. I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of
frankincense.
ⁱ Eph. 5. 27. 7 Thou art all fair, my love;—there is no spot in thee.
8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from
Lebanon:

¹ Or, that eat of, &c.

² Heb. breathe.

a "baldachin" or "canopy of gold" (not "bottom" as in A.V.), and with "a seat (not 'covering') of purple cushions," while "its interior is paved with (mosaic work, or tapestry of) love from (not 'for') the daughters of Jerusalem;" the meaning being that this part of the adornment is a gift of love, whereby the female Chorus have testified their goodwill to the bride, and their desire to gratify the king.

11. daughters of Zion] So called here to distinguish them from the bride's companions, who are always addressed by her as "daughters of Jerusalem."

his mother] Bathsheba (1 K. i. 11). This is the last mention of her in sacred history.

IV. 1-6. The king in a lyric song of five stanzas commends the beauty of the bride.

1. Thou hast doves' eyes &c.] Thine eyes are doves behind thy veil. So also in v. 3, vi. 7; Isai. xlvii. 2, "veil" is better than "locks."

that appear from &c.] Or, "that couch upon Mount Gilead." The point of comparison seems to be the multitudinousness of the flocks seen browsing on the verdant slopes of the rich pasture-lands (Num. xxvii. 1; Mic. vii. 14).

2. Whereof &c.] Or, "all of them are equal pairs, and none is bereft among

them," i.e. none has lost her mate. The points of comparison in this simile are of course brilliant whiteness, regularity, and completeness of number.

3. thy speech is comely] Perhaps, "thy mouth," i.e. the organ of speech.

4. The "tower of David" may be that mentioned in Neh. iii. 25-27; Mic. iv. 8. For the custom of hanging shields and other weapons in and upon buildings suited for the purpose, see Ezek. xxvii. 10, 11.

7-V. 1. The king meeting the bride in the evening of the same day, expresses once more his love and admiration in the sweetest and tenderest terms and figures. He calls her now "bride" (spouse, v. 8) for the first time, to mark it as the hour of their espousals, and "sister-bride" (spouse, vv. 9, 10, 12, v. 1), to express the likeness of thought and disposition which henceforth unite them. At the same time he invites her to leave for his sake her birthplace and its mountain neighbourhood, and live henceforth for him alone.

8. The order and collocation of words in the Hebrew is grand and significant. With me from Lebanon, O bride, with me from Lebanon thou shalt come, shalt look around (or wander forth) from the height (lit. "head") of Amanah, from the height of Shenir and Hermon, from dens of lions, from mountain-haunts of leopards. It is

- Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir ^a and ^b Deut. 3. 9.
 Hermon,
 From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.
 9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse;
 Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,
 "With one chain of thy neck."
 10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!
 "How much better is thy love than wine!"
 And the smell of thine ointments than all spices!
 11 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb:
 "Honey and milk are under thy tongue;"
 And the smell of thy garments is "like the smell of Lebanon."
 12 A garden "inclosed is my sister, my spouse;
 A spring shut up, a fountain sealed."
 13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant
 fruits;
 14 ^cCamphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron;
 Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;
 Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:
 15 A fountain of gardens, a well of ^dliving waters,
 And streams from Lebanon.
 16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;
 Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.

^c ch. 1. 2.

^m Prov. 24.
 13, 14.
 ch. 5. 1.
ⁿ Gen. 27. 27.
 Hos. 14. 6, 7.

^o John 4. 10.
 & 7. 38.

¹ Or, taken away my heart.² Heb. barred.³ Or, cypress, ch. 1. 14.

evidently a solemn invitation from the king in the sense of Ps. xlv. 10, 11. Four peaks in the same mountain-system are here named as a poetical periphrasis for northern Palestine, the region in which is situated the native home of the bride. (1) Amana (or Abana, 2 K. v. 12), that part of the Anti-libanus which overlooks Damascus. (2) Shenir or Senir, another peak of the same range (according to Deut. iii. 9, the Amorite name for Hermon, but spoken of here and 1 in Chro. v. 23 as distinct from it). (3) Hermon, the celebrated mountain which forms the culminating point of the Anti-libanus, on the north-eastern border of the Holy Land. (4) Lebanon, properly the western range overlooking the Mediterranean, but here used as a common designation for the whole mountain-system. Leopards are still not unfrequently seen there, but the lion has long since disappeared.

9-11. The similes employed refer to the graces of adornment, speech, and gesture, as expressions of inward character and sentiment.

9. *with one of thine eyes*] Rather, with one look of thine.

11. *honeycomb*] Lit. Thy lips distil a dropping (of pure honey). Cp. marg. ref.

12-15. The loveliness and purity of the bride are now set forth under the image of a paradise or garden fast barred against intruders, filled with rarest plants of excellent fragrance, and watered by abundant streams, Cp. Prov. v. 15-20.

12. *a fountain sealed*] i.e. A well-spring

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covered with a stone (Gen. xxix. 3), and sealed with "the king's own signet" (Dan. vi. 17; cp. Matt. xxvii. 66).

13. *orchard*] This is the rendering here and in Eccles. ii. 5 of "pardes" (see Neh. ii. 8 note). The pomegranate was for the Jews a sacred fruit, and a characteristic product of the Land of Promise (cp. Exod. xxviii. 33, 34; Num. xx. 5; Deut. viii. 8; 1 K. vii. 18, 20). It is frequently mentioned in the Song, and always in connexion with the bride. It abounds to this day in the ravines of the Lebanon.

camphire] *Cyprus*. See i. 14 note.

13-15. Seven kinds of spices (some of them with Indian names, e.g. aloes, spikenard, saffron) are enumerated as found in this symbolic garden. They are for the most part pure exotics which have formed for countless ages articles of commerce in the East, and were brought at that time in Solomon's ships from southern Arabia, the great Indian Peninsula, and perhaps the islands of the Indian Archipelago. The picture here is best regarded as a purely ideal one, having no corresponding reality but in the bride herself. The beauties and attractions of both north and south,—of Lebanon with its streams of sparkling water and fresh mountain air, of En-gedi with its tropical climate and henna plantations, of the spice-groves of Arabia Felix, and of the rarest products of the distant mysterious Ophir,—all combine to furnish one glorious representation, "Thou art all fair!"

16. The bride's brief reply, declaring her

H H

* ch. 5. 1.

Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his pleasant fruits.

* ch. 4. 16.

CHAP. 5. I *AM come into my garden, my sister, my spouse:

I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;

b ch. 4. 11.

I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;

I have drunk my wine with my milk:

c Luke 15.

Eat, O 'friends; drink, 'yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

7, 10.

John 3. 29.

& 15. 14.

d Rev. 3. 20.

2 I sleep, but my heart waketh:

It is the voice of my beloved ^dthat knocketh, *saying*,

Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:

For my head is filled with dew,

And my locks with the drops of the night.

3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?

I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door

And my bowels were moved ²for him.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved;

And my hands dropped *with* myrrh,

And my fingers *with* ³sweet smelling myrrh,

Upon the handles of the lock.

¹ Or, *and be drunken with*
loves.

² Or, (as some read) *in me.*

³ Heb. *passing, or, running*
about.

affection for the king and willingness to belong to him.

V. 1. *my honeycomb*] Lit. "my reed," or "my wood," i.e. the substance itself, or portions of it in which the comb is formed. The bees in Palestine form their combs not only in the hollows of trees and rocks, but also in reeds by the river-banks. The king's meaning appears to be: "All pleases me in thee, there is nothing to despise or cast away."

Eat, O friends] A salutation from the king to his assembled guests, or to the Chorus of young men his companions, bidding them in the gladness of his heart (iii. 11) partake of the banquet. So ends this day of outward festivity and supreme heart-joy. The first half of the Song of Songs is fitly closed. The second half of the poem commences (v. 2) with a change of tone and reaction of feeling similar to that of iii. 1. It terminates with the sealing (viii. 6, 7) of yet deeper love.

FOURTH PART. V. 2—VI. 9.

Some time may be supposed to have elapsed since the bride's solemn espousals with the king (iv. 7—v. 1). A transient cloud of doubt or estrangement is now passing over her soul, as by the relation of this dream she intimates to her friends. Ancient allegorical interpreters find here a symbol of the condition and feelings of Israel during the Babylonian Captivity, when the glories and privileges of Solomon's Temple were no more, and the manifested Presence of the Holy One had been with-

drawn. Israel in exile seeks the Lord (v. 8), and will find Him again in the second Temple (vi. 3—9).

2. *I sleep, but my heart waketh*] A poetical periphrasis for "I dream." Cp. the ancient saying: "Dreams are the vigils of those who slumber, hopes are waking dreams."

the voice] Or, "sound." Cp. ii. 8, note. She hears him knocking before he speaks.

my undefiled] Lit. "my perfect one." Vulg. "immaculata mea." Cp. iv. 7.

3. She makes trivial excuses, as one in a dream.

4. *put in his hand*] *Through* (lit. "from") *the hole* (of the lock), in order to raise the pins by which the bolt was fastened. The Oriental lock is a hollow piece of wood attached to the doorpost, into which a sliding-bolt is made to run. As soon as the bolt has been driven home a number of pins drop into holes prepared in it for their reception. To raise these pins, and so enable the bolt to be withdrawn, is to unfasten the lock. This is commonly done by means of the key (lit. "opener"), but may often be accomplished by the fingers if dipped in paste or some other adhesive substance. For such a purpose the beloved inserts his fingers here anointed with the costly unguent, which will presently distil on those of the bride when she rises to open to him.

5. *sweet smelling myrrh*] Or (as in margin) "running myrrh," that which first and spontaneously exudes, i.e. the freshest, finest myrrh. Even in withdrawing he has left this token of his unchanged love.

- 6 I opened to ~~my~~ beloved ;
 • But my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and was gone* :
 My soul failed when he spake :
^a I sought him, but I could not find him ; • ch. 3. 1.
 I called him, but he gave me no answer.
⁷ The watchmen that went about the city found me, / ch. 3. 8.
 They smote me, they wounded me ;
 The keepers of the walls took away my vail from me.
 8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
 If ye find my beloved, ¹ that ye tell him,
 That I *am* sick of love.
 9 What is thy beloved more than *another* beloved, ² O thou fairest • ch. 1. 8
 among women ?
 What is thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost
 so charge us ?
 10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy,
² The chiefest among ten thousand.
 11 His head *is as* the most fine gold,
 His locks *are* ³ bushy, *and* black as a raven.
 12 ^a His eyes *are as the eyes of* doves by the rivers of waters, ^ ch. 1. 15.
 Washed with milk, *and* ⁴ fitly set. & 4. 1.
 13 His cheeks *are as a bed of* spices, *as* ⁵ sweet flowers :
 His lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.
 14 His hands *are as* gold rings set with the beryl :
 His belly *is as* bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

¹ Heb. *what?*² Heb. *a standard-bearer.*³ Or, *curled.*⁴ Heb. *sitting in fulness,*
that is, *fitly placed, and*
*set as a precious stone in**the foil of a ring.*⁵ Or, *towers of perfumes.*

8. The bride, now awake, is seeking her beloved. The dream of his departure and her feelings under it have symbolized a real emotion of her waking heart.

V. 9—VI. 3. The bride's commendation of the beloved. In the allegorical interpretations of Jewish expositors all is here spoken by exiled Israel of the Holy One Whose praise she sings "by the waters of Babylon" (Ps. cxxxvii. 1). Christian interpreters apply the description directly to the Incarnate Son, partly in His Eternal Godhead, but chiefly in His risen and glorified Humanity.

10. *My beloved is white and ruddy*] Cp. 1 Sam. xvi. 12 ; Dan. vii. 9. The complexion most admired in youth. Jewish interpreters remark that He Who is elsewhere called "the Ancient of Days" is here described as the Ever-Young. "White in His virgin-purity," says St. Jerome, "and ruddy in His Passion."

the chiefest among ten thousand] Lit. "a bannered one among a myriad ;" hence one signalized, a leader of ten thousand warriors.

11. *His head is as the most fine gold*] Perhaps in the sense of noble and precious as the finest gold. Lam. iv. 2.
bushy] Waving like branches of the palm.

12. Or, *His eyes are doves*. The comparison is to doves seen by streams of water

washing in milk (i.e. milk-white), and *sitting on fulness* (i.e. on the full or abundant water-flood).

fitly set] This rendering supposes that the eyes within their sockets are compared to precious stones set in the foil of a ring (see marg.) ; but the other rendering is preferable. The milk-white doves themselves, sitting by full streams of water, or reflected in their flittings athwart the glassy surface, present images of the calm repose and vivid glances of the full pure lustrous eyes of the beloved.

13. *sweet flowers*] Better as in the margin, i.e. plants with fragrant leaves and flowers trained on trellis-work.

like lilies] *Are lilies dropping liquid myrrh* (see v. 5 note). Perhaps the fragrance of the flowers, or the delicate curl of the lip-like petals, is here the point of comparison, rather than the colour.

14. *His hands &c.] Are golden rings or cylinders*. The fingers of the bent or closed hand are compared to a massive ring or set of rings ; or, if outstretched or straightened, to a row of golden rods or cylinders.

the beryl] The *tarshish* (cp. Ex. xxviii. 20), probably the chrysolite of the ancients (so called from its *gold* colour), the modern *topaz*.

His belly &c.] His body (the Hebrew term applies to the whole body, from the shoulders

- 15 His legs *are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold* :
His countenance *is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.*
16 ¹His mouth *is most sweet* : yea, he *is altogether lovely.*
This *is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

^a ch. 1. 8. **CHAP. 6.** WHITHER *is thy beloved gone, "O thou fairest among women?"*

Whither *is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.*

- 2 My beloved *is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.*

^b ch. 2. 16.
& 7. 10.

- 3 ^bI *am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine* :
He feedeth among the lilies.

^c ver. 10.

- 4 Thou *art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,*
Comely as Jerusalem,—"terrible as an army with banners.

^d ch. 4. 1.

- 5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for ²they have overcome me :
Thy hair *is* ^das a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

^e ch. 4. 2.

- 6 ^eThy teeth *are* as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing,
Whereof every one beareth twins, and *there is not one barren among them.*

^f ch. 4. 3.

- 7 ^fAs a piece of a pomegranate *are thy temples within thy locks.*

- 8 There *are* threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,
And virgins without number.

- 9 My dove, my undefiled *is but one* ;
She *is the only one* of her mother,
She *is the choice one* of her that bare her.
The daughters saw her, and blessed her ;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

¹ Heb. *His palate.*

² Or, *they have puffed me up.*

to the thighs) *is a piece of ivory workmanship overlaid with sapphires.* The sapphire of the ancients seems to have been the lapis lazuli.

15. *His countenance*] Or, *his appearance* (his whole port and mien, but especially head and countenance) "*is as the Lebanon.*"

16. *he is altogether lovely*] Lit. the whole of him *desires or delights*; the plural substantive expressing the notion of the superlative. Theodoret, applying to our Lord the whole description, interprets well its last term : "Why should I endeavour to express His beauty piecemeal when He is in Himself and altogether the One longed-for, drawing all to love, compelling all to love, and inspiring with a longing (for His company) not only those who see, but also those who hear?"

VI. 1, 2. The question put by the Chorus, and the answer it receives from the bride, shew that the loss and seeking are not to be taken too seriously.

4-9. The section might be entitled, "Renewed declaration of love after brief estrangement."

4. *Tirzah...Jerusalem*] Named together as the then two fairest cities of the land. For Jerusalem compare Ps. xlviii. 2.

"Tirzah" (i.e. "Grace" or "Beauty") was an old Canaanitish royal city (Josh. xii. 24). It became again a royal residence during the reigns of Baasha and his three successors in the kingdom of the ten tribes, and may well therefore have been famed for its beauty in the time of Solomon.

terrible as &c.] **Awe-inspiring as the bannered (hosts).** The warlike image, like others in the Song, serves to enhance the charm of its assured peace.

5. Even for the king the gentle eyes of the bride have an awe-striking majesty. Such is the condescension of love. Now follows (vv. 5-7) the longest of the repetitions which abound in the Song, marking the continuance of the king's affection as when first solemnly proclaimed (iv. 1-6). The two descriptions belong, according to some (Christian) expositors, to the Church of different periods, e.g. to the primitive Church in the splendour of her first vocation, and to the Church under Constantine; other (Jewish) expositors apply them to "the congregation of Israel" under the first and second Temples respectively.

9. The king contrasts the bride with the other claimants for her royal estate or favour (v. 8). She not only outshines them

- 10 Who is she ~~that~~ looketh forth as the morning,
 • Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
 • And terrible as an army with banners? ⁹ ver. 4.
- 11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the
 • valley,
 • And ^{to} see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates ^{budded.} ¹⁰ ch. 7. 12.
- 12 ¹Or ever I was aware, my soul ²made me like the chariots of
 Ammi-nadib.
- 13 Return, return, O Shulamite;
 Return, return, that we may look upon thee.
 What will ye see in the Shulamite?
 As it were the company ³of two armies.

¹ Heb. *I knew not.*

² Or, *set me on the chariots
 of my willing people.*

³ Or, *of Mahanaim,*
 Gen. 32. 2.

all for him, but herself has received from them disinterested blessing and praise.

This passage is invaluable as a divine witness to the principle of monogamy under the Old Testament and in the luxurious age of Solomon.

FIFTH PART. VI. 10—VIII. 4.

The Chorus address the bride here only as the Shulamite, and beg her to perform for their entertainment a sacred dance (see vi. 13) of her own country. The bride, after complying with their request, while they sing some stanzas in her praise (vii. 1-5), and after receiving fresh commendations from the king (vii. 6-10), invites him to return with her to her mother's house (vii. 11-viii. 4). Many Jewish allegorists interpret the whole as referring to the times of the second Temple, and to the present dispersion of Israel, during which, God continuing to vouchsafe His mercy, Israel prays for final restoration, the coming of Messiah, and the glory of the latter day. Christian interpreters have made similar applications to the now militant Church looking for the Second Advent, or to the ancient Synagogue praying for the Incarnation.

10. *as the morning*] The glorious beauty of the bride bursts upon them like a second dawn, as she comes forth to meet them at the commencement of another day. Peculiar poetical words are used for "sun" (burning heat) and "moon" (white one). The same terms are applied to sun and moon in Isai. xxiv. 23, xxx. 26.

11-12. The bride's words may be paraphrased: "You speak of me as a glorious beauty; I was lately but a simple maiden engaged in rustic toils. I went down one day into the walnut-garden" (the walnut abounded on the shores of Lake Gennesaret, and is still common in Northern Palestine) "to inspect the young plants of the vale" (i.e. the wady, or watercourse, with now verdant banks in the early spring after

the rainy season), "and to watch the budding and blossoming of vine and pomegranate." Cp. ii. 11-13 notes. "Then, suddenly, ere I was myself aware, my soul" (the love-bound heart) "had made me the chariot of a lordly people" (i.e. an exalted personage, one who resides on the high places of the earth; cp. 2 K. ii. 12, xiii. 14, where Elijah and Elisha, as the spiritual leaders of the nation, are "the chariot and horsemen of Israel," cp. also Isai. xxii. 18). This last clause is another instance of the love for military similitudes in the writer of the Song.

Ammi-nadib] Lit. *my people a noble one*. The reference is either to Israel at large as a wealthy and dominant nation, under Solomon, or to the bride's people (the Shulamites) in particular, to the chief place among whom, by her union with the king, she is now exalted.

13. *Return, return*] About to withdraw, the bride is recalled by the Chorus, desiring yet a little longer to contemplate a grace and beauty which has won all hearts.

Shulamite] Probably the same as "Shunamite," i.e. a native of the town or district of Shunem, situated in the territory of Issachar (Josh. xix. 18), on the slopes of the Little Hermon, overlooking the plain of Jezreel. It is now called Sâlem.

see] *Look or gaze at*. The bride's modest reply, taking up their words, and wondering at their request. The Chorus answer with a further petition.

As it were the company of two armies] Or, rather, the dance of Mahanaim (see margin), a well-known sacred dance, taking its name from the locality in which it originated (Gen. xxxii. 2; Josh. xxi. 38). Some, taking "Mahanaim" to be an ordinary designation for "the Angels" or "Angelic Hosts," render here "a dance as it were of angel-choirs," i.e. one of peculiar grace and beauty. The former of these interpretations is to be preferred.

* Ps. 45. 13. **CHAP. 7.** HOW beautiful are thy feet with shoes, "O prince's daughter!"

The joints of thy thighs are like jewels,
The work of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not¹ liquor:
Thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

^b ch. 4. 5.

3 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

^c ch. 4. 4.

4 Thy neck is as a tower of ivory;

Thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim:

Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

5 Thine head upon thee is like² Carmel,
And the hair of thine head like purple;
The king is³ held in the galleries.

6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
And thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of the boughs thereof:

Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy nose like apples;

¹ Heb. *mixture*.

² Or, *crimson*.

³ Heb. *bound*.

VII. 1-5. The Shulamite complies with the request of her attendants, and as she glides before them in the dance, they sing in further commendation of her beauty of form and grace of movement. The description in the original consists, like iv. 1-5, of five stanzas nearly coinciding with the verses in the text.

1. *thy feet with shoes*] Or, *thy steps in the sandals*: the bride's feet are seen in motion in the dance. "Joints" might be rendered *circling movements*.

prince's daughter] Or, daughter of a noble; the bride is of honourable though not of kingly birth.

like jewels] The image suggested is that of large well-formed pearls or other jewels skilfully strung or linked together.

2. Or, "Thy lap is like a moon-shaped bowl where mixed wine faileth not." The wine in the bowl rising to the brim adds to the beauty of the vessel, and gives a more pleasing image to the eye. Some interpret, "thy girdle is like a moon-shaped bowl," or "bears a moon-shaped ornament" (cp. Isai. iii. 18).

set about with lilies] The contrast is one of colours, the flowers, it may be, representing the purple of the robe. "The heap of wheat is not seen because covered by the lilies."

4. *a tower of ivory*] The tower of ivory, the allusion being to some particular tower, built probably by Solomon (1 K. x. 21).

fishpools in Heshbon] Or, simply pools. Among the ruins to the south of Heshbon still remain a number of deep wells cut in the rock, and a large reservoir of water.

The simile well sets forth the appearance of a large clear liquid eye (cp. v. 12 note).

gate of Bath-rabbim]. Perhaps the gate looking towards Rabbath-Ammon on the north side of the city, though this does not agree with the wells above mentioned; or, the gate of the city "full of people" (Lam. i. 1); or, an expression indicating the gate itself as the scene of numerous gatherings.

nose] Better perhaps "face" or "brow."
the tower of Lebanon] Possibly "the house of the forest of Lebanon" or part of it (1 K. vii. 2, ix. 19), built by Solomon in the early part of his reign; or possibly a watchtower erected by David to overawe Damascus after his war with Hadadezer (2 Sam. viii. 6).

5. Cp. and contrast with v. 15. The rendering in the margin takes "Carmel" as the name of a colour, equivalent to "crimson" (rendered "crimson" in 2 Chr. ii. 7, 14, iii. 14). This interpretation is favoured by the parallelism with "purple," but removes a beautiful image.

purple] A deep violet black.
the king &c.] Rather, "A king is bound in the tresses or windings of thy hair." These last words indicate the king's approach.

6-10. A brief dialogue; vv. 6-9 are spoken by the king, v. 9 and v. 10 by the bride.

6. A general sentiment.

How fair, and what a charm hast thou,
O love! among delightful things!

Cp. ii. 7, viii. 6, 7 notes.

7. *This thy stature*] The king now ad-

- 9 And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved,
 • that goeth down ¹ sweetly,
 Causing the lips ² of those that are asleep to speak.
- 10 ^a I am my beloved's, and ^c his desire is toward me. ^d ch. 2. 16.
^e 6. 3.
- 11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
 Let us lodge in the villages. ^f Ps. 45. 11.
- 12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
 Let us ^g see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape ^h ch. 6. 11.
ⁱ appear,
 And the pomegranates bud forth:
 There will I give thee my loves.
- 13 The ^j mandrakes give a smell, ^k Gen. 30. 14.
 And at our gates ^l are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and ^m Matt. 13.
52.
 • old,
 Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

CHAP. 8. O THAT thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!

When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;
 Yea, ⁿ I should not be despised.

- 2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me:

I would cause thee to drink of ^o spiced wine of the juice of my ^p Prov. 9. 2.
 pomegranate.

- 3 ^q His left hand should be under my head, ^r ch. 2. 6.
 And his right hand should embrace me.

- 4 ^s I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, ^t ch. 2. 7.
^u 3. 5.
^v That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.

¹ Heb. straightly.
² Or, of the ancient.
³ Heb. open

⁴ Heb. they should not
 despise me.

⁵ Heb. why should ye stir
 up, or, why, &c.

dresses the bride, comparing her to palm, vine, and apple-tree for nobility of form and pleasantness of fruit; and the utterances of her mouth to sweetest wine.

9. for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly] Words of the bride interrupting the king, and finishing his sentence, that goeth smoothly or pleasantly for my beloved. Cp. Prov. xxiii. 31.

10. his desire is toward me] All his affection has me for its object. The bride proceeds to exercise her power over his loving will.

11.-VIII. 4. Cp. iv. 8. The bride in her turn invites her beloved to revisit in her company the lowly scenes of pastoral life, out of which his grace had raised her. So in the latter day the Church of the Redeemed in heavenly places will pray for the Lord's return to earth.

12. the tender grape appear] Or, the vine-blossom unfold. See ii. 13 note. It is now again the same season as that in which the king had first visited the bride (ii. 8-17). This thought enhances her desire to have him with her there again.

13. The mandrakes] Love-apples. all manner of pleasant fruits] Or, things, both fruits and flowers; "the new" to be freshly gathered, "the old" already laid up in store.

VIII. 1. Royal rank and splendour are grown wearisome. The king once called her "sister" and "sister-bride." Would he were indeed as a "brother," her mother's own child whom she might meet, embrace, and welcome everywhere without restraint or shame. Her love for him is simple, sacred, pure, free from the unrest and the stains of mere earthly passion.

2. who would instruct me] Or, thou shouldest teach me [Isai. liv. 13]. Some allegorists make the whole passage (vii. 11-viii. 2) a prayer of the Synagogue for the Incarnation of the Word, like i. 2 (see note). Others, a prayer of the Church under both covenants for that complete union with the Incarnate Godhead which is still future.

3. The bride now turns to and addresses the Chorus as before (marg. ref.).

4. that ye stir not up] Lit. as in the margin. For "my love" read as before love. The omission of "the roes and hinds" here is noticeable. Hebrew doctors regard this charge here and elsewhere (ii. 7, iii. 5) as an admonition to Israel not to attempt obtaining a possession of, or restoration to, the Promised Land, and union or reunion there with the Holy One, before being inwardly prepared for it by the trials of the wilderness and the exile. This interpreta-

SOLOMON'S SONG. VIII.

- ch. 3. 6. 5 ^dWho is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?
- I raised thee up under the apple tree:
There thy mother brought thee forth:
There she brought thee forth that bare thee.
- Isai. 40. 16. 6 ^eSet me as a seal upon thine heart,
Jer. 22. 24. As a seal upon thine arm:
Hag. 2. 23. For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is ¹cruel as the grave:
The coals thereof are coals of fire,
Which hath a most vehement flame.
- 7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
- Prov. 6. 35. ^fIf a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
It would utterly be contemned.
- Ezek. 23. 8 ^gWe have a little sister, and she hath no breasts:
33. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

¹ Heb. *hard*.

tion comes very near to what appears to be the genuine literal meaning (see ii. 7 note). They suppose the words here to be addressed by Messiah to Israel in "the wilderness of the people" (Ezek. xx. 35), in the latter day, and the former words (iii. 5) by Moses in the wilderness of Sinai.

SIXTH PART. vv. 5-14.

5-7. The scene changes from Jerusalem to the birthplace of the bride, where she is seen coming up towards her mother's house, leaning on the arm of the great king her beloved.

5. *Who is this?* Cp. and contrast with iii. 6. In the former scene all was splendour and exaltation, but here condescension, humility, and loving charm.

I raised thee up &c.] Beneath this apple-tree I wakened thee. The king calls the bride's attention to a fruit-tree, which they pass, the trysting-spot of earliest vows in this her home and birthplace. The Masoretic pointing of the Hebrew text (the most ancient traditional interpretation) assigns these words to the bride, but the majority of Christian Fathers to the king. The whole passage gains in clearness and dramatic expression by the latter arrangement.

6, 7. The bride says this as she clings to his arm and rests her head upon his bosom. Cp. John xiii. 23, xxi. 20. This brief dialogue corresponds to the longer one (iv. 7-v. 1), on the day of their espousals. Allegorical interpreters find a fulfilment of this in the close of the present dispensation, the restoration of Israel to the Land of Promise, and the manifestation of Messiah to His ancient people there, or His Second Advent to the Church. The Targum makes v. 6 a prayer of Israel restored to the Holy

Land that they may never again be carried into captivity, and v. 7 the Lord's answering assurance that Israel henceforth is safe. Cp. Isai. lxxv. 24, lxii. 3, 4.

6. The key-note of the poem. It forms the Old Testament counterpart to St. Paul's panegyric (1 Cor. xiii.) under the New.

(a) Love is here regarded as an universal power, an elemental principle of all true being, alone able to cope with the two eternal foes of God and man, Death and his kingdom.

"For strong as death is love,
Tenacious as Sheol is jealousy."

"Jealousy" is here another term for "love," expressing the inexorable force and ardour of this affection, which can neither yield nor share possession of its object, and is identified in the mind of the sacred writer with Divine or true Life. (b) He goes on to describe it as an all-pervading Fire, kindled by the Eternal One, and partaking of His essence:

"Its brands are brands of fire,
A lightning-flash from Jah."

Cp. Deut. iv. 24. (c) This divine principle is next represented as overcoming in its might all opposing agencies whatsoever, symbolized by water. (d) From all which it follows that love, even as a human affection, must be revered, and dealt with so as not to be bought by aught of different nature; the attempt to do this awakening only scorn.

8-12. A brief dialogue commencing with a question and answer probably made by brothers of the bride concerning a younger sister who will soon be old enough to be asked in marriage. The answer is given in the form of a parable: "If she be a wall," i.e. steadfast in chastity and virtue, one on

- 9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver :
And if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.
- 10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers :
Then was I in his eyes as one that found ¹favour.
- 11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon ;
^aHe let out the vineyard unto keepers ;
Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand *pieces* of ^bsilver. ^c
^dMatt. 21. 33.
- 12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me :
Thou, O Solomon, *must* have a thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.
- 13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
^eThe companions hearken to thy voice :
^fCause me to hear it.
- 14 ^gMake haste, my beloved,
And ^hbe thou like to a roe or to a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices. ⁱch. 2. 14.
^jSee Rev. 22. 17, 20.
^kch. 2. 17.

¹ Heb. *peace*.² Heb. *Flee away*.

whom no light advances can be made, then let us honour and reward her. This fortress-wall shall be crowned as it were with a tower or battlement of silver. But "if she be a door," light-minded and accessible to seduction (Prov. vii. 11, 12), then let us provide against assailants the protection of a cedar-bar or panel.

10. The bride herself replies with the pride of innocence and virtue already crowned. She has shown herself to be such a fortress-wall as her brothers have alluded to, and her reward has been the royal favour.

11, 12. She next turns to the king, and commends her brothers to his favourable regard by means of another parable. Solomon owns a vineyard in Baal-hamon (possibly Bālbak, or identical with Amana [Conder]), situated in the warm and fertile plains of Coele-Syria, overshadowed by the heights of Lebanon (iv. 8). This vineyard he has let out to tenants &c.

The bride also has a vineyard of her own (i. 6), her beauty and virtue faithfully guarded by these same brothers in time past. This vineyard now belongs to Solomon. Let him have "the thousand" which is his due—she is indeed herself henceforth entirely his—but let the faithful keepers have their meed as well. At least two hundred silverlings should be theirs—a double tithe of royal praise and honour.

13, 14. The poem having opened with the song of a Chorus in praise of the king (i. 2-4), concludes with a versicle recited by the bride, repeating the last words of her former strain (ii. 17), with one significant change. She no longer thinks of the possibility of separation. The "Mountains of Bether" (division) of ii. 17, are now "Mountains of Besamim" (spices). His haunts and hers are henceforth the same (cp. iv. 6).

